

KITCHENER
AND OTHER POEMS
BY ROBERT J. C. STEAD

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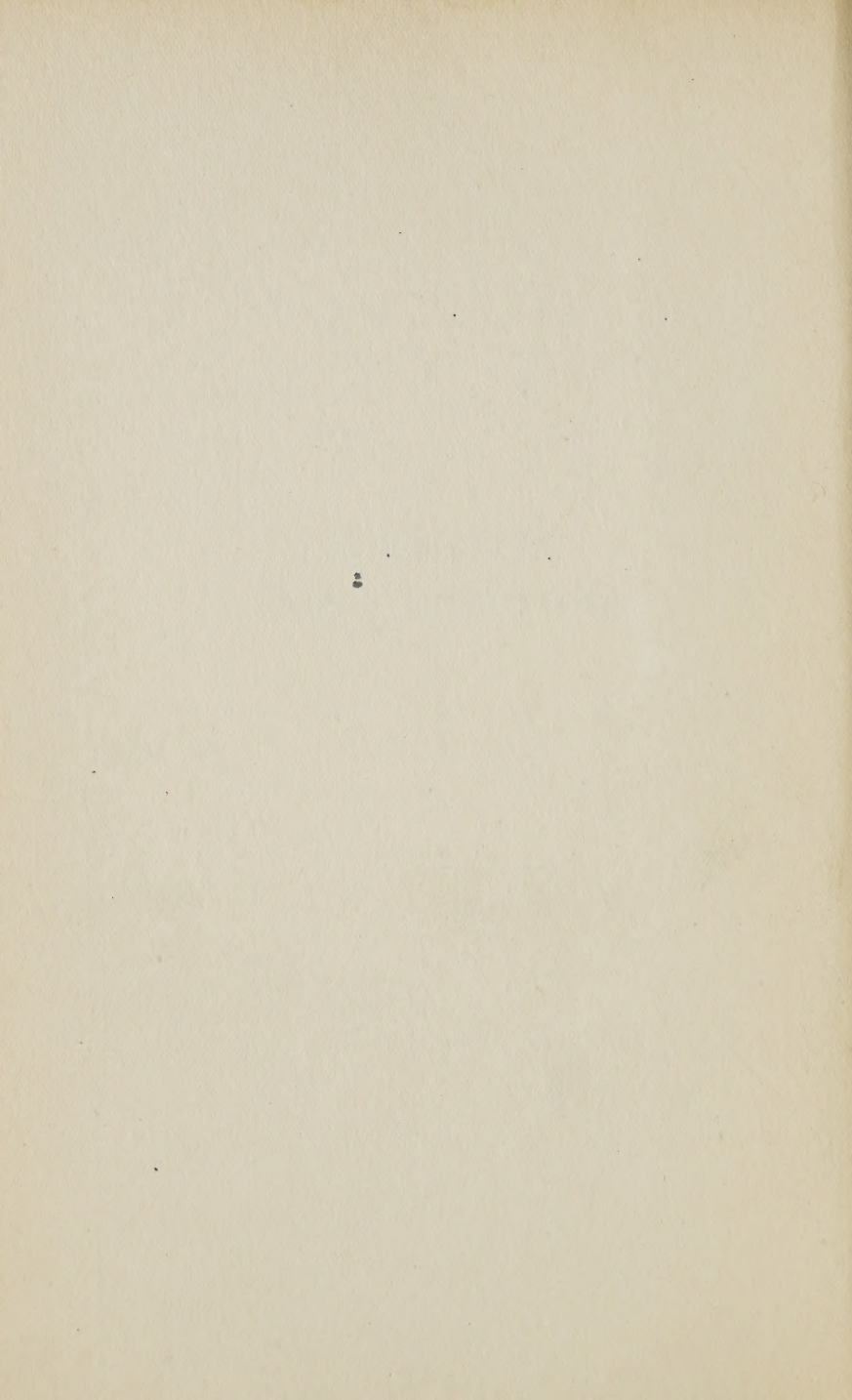
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KITCHENER
AND OTHER POEMS



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AND OTHER POEMS

By

Robert J. C. Stead

Author of "The Homesteaders," "Prairie Born,"
"The Empire Builders," "Songs of
the Prairie," Etc.

With an Introduction by

William T. Allison, Ph.D.,

Professor of English, Wesley College, Winnipeg, Man.



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ROBERT J. C. STEAD, POET OF THE PRAIRIES

Robert J. C. Stead, of Calgary, is the only singer of any decided merit that the Canadian West has yet produced. That other Robert, who has won such wide fame with his unconventional Klondike lyrics, is a hinterland poet; his verse is not truly representative of the life and thought of the vast majority of people whom we call Westerners. Robert Service has voiced the varied emotions of miners and adventurers, transients in a wildly beautiful and, in many respects, terrible land of ice and gold. Stead, on the other hand, while living in sight of the ice-crowned Rockies and with the lonely wilderness not many hours distant, centres his gaze upon the prairie country with its peaceful industry and innumerable problems incidental to the settling of a fertile empire. Occasionally cow-boys and smugglers gallop through the foot-hills of his verse; he has devoted several of the lyrics of his former volumes, "The Empire Builders" and "Prairie Born," to romantic doings in the Alberta of earlier days, but the bulk of his poetry has to do with the affairs and aspirations of wheat-growing patriots. He is a poet neither wild nor woolly; he lives in a community which is beginning to pride itself on its urbanity; he is intensely concerned in

the dreams and deeds of ordinary everyday Western Canadians.

One of the signs that Robert Stead is a civilized poet is the patriotic character of his verse. He has been inspired not so much by Phoebus Apollo and the Muses nine as by Britannia, who in these days of innumerable war-poems ought to be designated a tenth muse. From the very first the Calgary poet has sung the glories of the Motherland, of Canada and the Empire. By its very title the present volume continues this strain and its best lyrics testify to the intense love and admiration of their author for our mother across the sea and all her faithful allies and children who are standing by her in the agonies of the Great War. Perhaps nothing could better illustrate the unity of the Empire than the fact that Mr. Stead's poem on the death of Lord Kitchener has had such wide circulation and, needless to say, such power of appeal. It was written a few hours after the announcement of the great war-lord's death. Through the agency of the Western Associated Press it appeared next day in many of the morning dailies of Canada. It is probably the only Canadian poem that was ever incorporated complete into a telegraphic news service. Later it was copied by the leading newspapers of England, was eulogized by the London "Spectator," was reprinted by English admirers for distribution in the army hospitals of the old land, and subsequently found its way around the world in the press of east and west. Among the poems

called forth by the war this lyric with its grave rhythm and restrained passion will have an honored place.

There is nothing tawdry about Mr. Stead's patriotic verse. He does not allow his fervor to run away with his sense of proportion. In his pre-bellum verse he mixed praise of Canada with judicious criticism. In "The Charity Ward," written years before the war, he reproved the little Canadians who were willing to accept the protection of the British Navy without contributing a dollar towards the enormous cost of maintenance. In one of his most scornful poems Mr. Stead declared that Canada was "the Charity Ward of the Empire, a nation only in name." In stinging lines he taunted his fellow-countrymen because of their willingness to receive everything and give nothing in return,—

Valiant are ye, and haughty, mighty in speech and
song,

But ye turn your eyes to heaven when the hat is
passed along.

The advent of war changed all that, however. The poet's occasion for fault-finding has been removed and he has been supplied with inspiring themes by a citizen soldiery whose transformation from farmers to warriors he celebrates in his joyous poem, "We Were Men of the Furrow."

Glory in abundant measure has been earned by Canada's heroes at Ypres and Vimy Ridge and in a dozen other fiercely-contested fights, glory enough to justify

any poet of east or west in composing the strongest panegyrics, but readers of Mr. Stead's war-verse in this volume will search it in vain for any fulsome or extravagant eulogy. His finest praise of Canada in Flanders is to be found in "The Call," in which he reviews the quiet and ardent response of the dominions overseas in the Motherland's hour of need. Note the echo of the poet's earlier jealousy for the honor of his country in this earnest stanza which closes with words of sonorous and solemn pride,—

And thou, mine own, for whom my soul had feared,
That in that day thy heart should shrink and
crawl;
Lest gain and getting, o'er endeared,
Should leave thee fat and visionless withal;
In peace thy vainer side was uppermost
And seared with ends and aims of little worth;
In war, thy sons from coast to coast
Have made thy name a glory through the earth.

The mood in which Mr. Stead has conceived and written the most powerful war poems of this volume is expressed in the central lyric, "Why Don't They Cheer?" After reading that pensive interpretation of the war sadness in our hearts, which forbids noisy demonstrations of farewell to those departing for the valley of the dreadful shadow, we can understand why Mr. Stead avoids the hip-hip-hurrah, superficial style of patriotic verse. He could write that sort, if he

would, but he has a sense of the fitness of things, and the exquisite little elegy, "He Sleeps in Flanders," shows ability to penetrate into the heart of things, to stir the depths of the soul.

Although the public has little patience with literature that does not bear some relation to the great struggle in which the fate of civilization is at stake, Mr. Stead has done well to include in this volume a number of poems which indicate his ante-bellum point of view. Like one of those relief scenes in the drama, they serve as a contrast to the burden of tragedy in the first part of this collection of song. At any rate they will turn the mind of the reader back to those years of sunny peace on the western plains when the very thought of war seemed to be a laughable impossibility.

And no book by Mr. Stead would be a complete expression of himself unless it contained poems redolent of the prairie. Some of his songs have imprisoned the odor of the prairie rose, others waft to us "the soft tang of smudge-smoke," to use one of his own expressive phrases, and throughout his peace poems we hear the whisper of the wheat.

The most unobservant reader cannot help but be conscious of atmosphere in Robert Stead's poetry. There is a sense of bigness and freedom, a suggestion of "the fields boundless and beautiful," an open-air gusto which no westerner can mistake and no easterner can dislike. Mr. Stead has never joined the fraternity of *vers libre* poets. Nor does he emulate those

of the opposite extreme, the parlor poets, makers of pretty verse, who prefer beauty of form to vigor of thought. With Mr. Stead subject matter is of first importance; he does not despise melody and has a good command of it, but he does not indulge in art for art's sake, and does not believe in cluttering up his straight-going poems with meretricious ornament.

Eastern readers may conclude that the Calgary poet is too stately in his measures, too refined in his phraseology to be regarded as a typical western singer. The people of the east ought to learn, however, that the citizens of the Canadian west, most of whom are of eastern birth and education, are as grave and as self-controlled as those of Ontario or Massachusetts. And in the earnest, almost solemn, utterance of these new war poems, more than in the local color of his verse, Mr. Stead seems to me to be worthy of the sobriquet bestowed upon him, "The Poet of the Prairies." He is now thirty-seven years of age, and has spent nearly all his life in the prairie country. Born on a boulder-run Ontario farm, he was taken in his infancy to the Turtle Mountain district of Southern Manitoba. There his parents "homesteaded it," one hundred and twenty miles from a railway and miles distant from the nearest neighbor. Although in his early manhood Mr. Stead imitated the pushful rising generation by going further west, he has been on the prairies practically all his days. Bracing summers, grim winters, big distances, color, movement, the free life of a new country,

have entered into his make-up and are reflected in his virile novels and best of all in his poetry. But it is in his note of reserve and in his serious application of ideas to life that Robert Stead appeals to the men of the West as their foremost poet.

W. T. ALLISON.

Wesley College, Winnipeg.

Sept. 1, 1917.

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Kitchener and Other Poems



KITCHENER

*Weep, waves of England! Nobler clay
Was ne'er to nobler grave consigned;
The wild waves weep with us to-day
Who mourn a nation's master-mind.*

*We hoped an honored age for him,
And ashes laid with England's great;
And rapturous music, and the dim
Deep hush that veils our Tomb of State.*

*But this is better. Let him sleep
Where sleep the men who made us free,
For England's heart is in the deep,
And England's glory is the sea.*

*One only vow above his bier,
One only oath beside his bed;
We swear our flag shall shield him here
Until the sea gives up its dead!*

*Leap, waves of England! Boastful be,
And fling defiance in the blast,
For Earth is envious of the Sea
Which shelters England's dead at last.*

THE AWAKENING

How well we slept through all the thoughtless years,
Secure in smug assumption that the goal
Lay straight before us; we were fat of soul
And over-polished with adroit veneers
That flung our image back into our eyes—
Had in our folly grown so sanely wise
We smiled when doubters babbled ancient fears
And dinned unwelcome warnings in our ears.

For knew they not the world had moved apace
Since fields were won with any flood but gold?
New times had poured old manners in a mould
More to the liking of our day of grace;
Our common English opened every door—
(Convenient usher of the Chosen Race!)
Our threads of commerce circled every shore;
Our warp of finance held the world in place.

We had not dreamt that Infamy could still
Be base as in the basest days of old;
That cultured hate is hate a thousand fold;
That where it cannot conquer, it can kill;
That Virtue in the lawful bride of Lust;
That only fools are faithful to their trust;
We had not dreamt the truth, nor half, until
It stood revealed in murder-working will!

Oh ears that would not hear, at last ye hear!

Oh eyes that would not see, at last ye see!

Oh Valor, strike for Freedom and the free!

Oh Honor—ye who hold your honor dear—

Drive! Every virtue focussed in your thrust!

Drive! Doubly armed who have your quarrel just!

Ye know the taunt, the toast, the Teuton sneer—

Strike home, Britannia, Heaven's volunteer!

ENGLAND

THOU, England, mother of the world's elect,
And foster mother to the lesser lands,
In Honor's simple garlands deck'd,
Reserved, austere, and circumspect,
With the far faith that works in honest hands:
Thou, having neither envyings nor hate,
Didst count thyself at one with all the world:
How now shall answer to the call of Fate?
How now shall meet the battle-flags unfurled?

They said thy sons were tallow in their bones,
Thy maidens aimless, or with aims perverse;
Thy wealth a hiving-box of drones;
In dismal and despondent tones
They mourned for thee—and marvelled at thy
purse;—
And knew the end could not be long delayed
For thou were't old and rotten at the core,
Blind, heedless, set, and unafraid,
Though the assassin thundered at the door.

In civic strife they saw thee torn apart
And knew not every growth is born in pain;
In every nerve and fibre start
The throbings of the mother-heart,
And shall they say she travaileth in vain?
Her very freedom nursed her own unrest;
Her very broadness made her seem confined;
'Twas Evolution beating in her breast;
'Twas Aspiration groping in her mind.

What answer then shall England make to-day
While worlds look on and wait with baited breath?
Though cravens choose the cheaper way
The cheaper price she will not pay
And England answers, Honor, or the death!
The cry of Belgium pierces through the sea,
The heart of France beats wild in sudden need;
And England's arm is fighting for the free,
And England's faith is crystallized in deed!

Go tell the scoffers British blood is red!
Go tell the doubters British hearts are true!
The liars thought her honor dead,
The liars now shall die instead,
Her mighty arm is bared to dare and do;
No sudden impulse sweeps her from her path;
No smug delusion beckons to the fray;
But all her seas are grey with armed wrath
As her brave sons rush forth to greet "The Day!"

THE CALL

*The little lands shall rise again;
The great shall grovel, stricken, at their feet;
And from the night of blood and pain
Shall rise a Freedom perfect and complete.*

What call is this that sounds across the deep,
What pulse is this that beats beyond the sea,
Where Britain's farthest watches keep
Her farthest faith inviolate and free?
What voice so low its whisper is unheard
In ears untuned to Freedom's fine demands;
What voice so deep its lightest word
Can wreathe in fire the sisterhood of lands?

"They will not hear the call," the foeman said,
"Or if they hear will hear it to defy;"
Himself, on force and fury fed,
Thinks only force can drive a man to die;
And looking from the mother to her sons
He saw no force to herd them to the fight;
Behold, a force not born of guns
Shall drive them forth in majesty and might.

Where broad Australia's torrid sun and sky
Have reared a Britain, bounding, bold, and free,
And proved the race that does not die
In any zone, or swept by any sea,—
Her bursting manhood heard the world-alarm,
That hour her flag of vict'ry was unfurled,
And by her consecrated arm
Australia won her place with all the world.

Yon other Britain, swept by Southern seas,
And blazing paths to older lands unknown—
From Freedom's foremost argosies
Her flag of progress evermore is flown—
The world lay 'tween her and the Teuton rage;
She hated war; she might have missed the fray;
She wrote herself a nobler page
In crimson ink upon Gallipoli.

Thou youngest son of Freedom in the South,
In whom we trusted; (could our trust be vain?)
We forced the bridle in your mouth
And turned you loose e'er you had felt the rein;
We feared and trusted; never fear more base,
And never trust more worthily bestowed;
You proved your kinship in the race;
Before we called your troops were on the road!

And thou of whom we heard a darker strain,
And something doubted, something trusted, still,
Were all our bold adventures vain
And all our good as nothing to our ill?
The gulf of creed and color held apart,
The ages lay between our day and thine;
You showed a noble creed at heart
And stained the color out in crimson wine.

And thou, mine own, for whom my soul had feared,
That in that day thy heart should shrink and crawl;
Lest gain and getting, o'er endeared,
Should leave thee fat and visionless withal;
In peace thy vainer side was uppermost
And seared with ends and aims of little worth;
In war, thy sons from coast to coast
Have made thy name a glory through the earth.

From every island of the farthest seas,
From desert dunes and lands without a name,
Where'er their banners lapped the breeze
The sons of Britain heard the call—and came;
None for himself, but each for all, they came,
And each for all, and all for each, they stand,
And in their hearts one end, one aim,
One hope, one purpose, one supreme demand—

*The little lands shall rise again;
The great shall grovel, stricken, at their feet;
And from the night of blood and pain
Shall rise a Freedom, perfect and complete.*

WE WERE MEN OF THE FURROW

WE were men of the furrow, men of the hammer and
spade;
Men of the plain and the forest, children of commerce
and trade;
Men of the day and the distance; men of the mothering
earth;
Laying the lines of a nation nurturing fair from the
birth.

Taking our freedom for granted, we, who had ever
been free;
Speaking the tongue of our fathers, confident, com-
posite, we;
Welcoming all in our borders, laying our wealth at
their feet,
Querying not of their motives; holding their honor
complete.

Little thought we of the war-cloud, little of drilling
and drill;
We were for peace with our neighbors—peace (and
a pocket to fill);
Only one neighbor we counted, only one neighbor we
knew;
Him—though we watched him—we trusted; trusted,
and felt he was true.

Proud of our flag and traditions; proud, but not boast-
fully so;
Dreaming our dreams and our visions, planning the
way we would go;
Saying, This task for to-morrow; life shall be clay in
our hands;
We shall be first of the nations, fattest and fairest of
lands.

Then in the quivering heaven gathered the threaten-
ing wrath;
We looked—and went on with our labors; heard, and
replied with a laugh;
Surely the world was for business; (list to the hammer
and spade);
Leave the war-lords to their lusting—on with our
traffic and trade!

Then, in a flash, it was on us; blazed, and it dazzled
our eyes;
Then for a moment we faltered, suddenly sick with
surprise;
Next, by the blood that was in us, and a manhood not
wholly undone,
We were stripping the cloth for the khaki and dropping
the spade for the gun.

What of the men of the furrow, men of the hammer
and spade,
Men without heart for the soldier, loathing his life and
his trade?
What? Let the enemy answer; he scoffed at our
fighters, and then
The flower of his finest battalions went down to our
peace-loving men.

Well may the world read a lesson, well may it learn,
and be wise;
Not to the strong is the battle; not to the swift is the
prize;
Loud is the boast of the despot, clanking his nation in
arms,
*But beware of a peace-loving people when they sweep
from their forests and farms!*

THE WAR LORD

I do not hate thee; hate would lend
A human fineness strangely out of place;
From hate itself there may ascend
Some milder passion in a milder case.

For hate is black as love is white,
And therefore bears relationship to love;
Thou liest in a Stygian night
That knows no link of sunshine from above.

And hate may grow from ignorance,
From minds half-matched and motives half-re-
vealed;
But thou revealest at a glance
A foulness hate itself would have concealed.

I do not hate the sore that breaks
To rid the flesh of poison in the blood,
Nor hate the reptile when it slakes
Its thirst in beds of filthiness and mud.

I do not hate but I could pity thee,
Could pity find a way to thy desire;
But thou art barren; back to me
Comes pity, outraged, drabbled with thy mire.

But fear can reach thee, and thy sight
Is bleared with horrors catching at thy heart;
The babes of Belgium cry at night
Their curses on the monster that thou art.

JUNE, 1915

How sweet the prairie blossoms bloom!

How soft the moonlight nestles on the lake!
There is no hint of worlds a-doom

In the low murmurings the night birds make;
A settler's window winks afar

As wife or daughter pass athwart the light;
And in the East is still a star,

And the warm earth breathes softly in the night

The whispering, confidential wheat

Knows the hushed thrill of harvest in its womb;
And little eyes and little feet

Flit in and out, and twinkle in the gloom;
The breeze that stirs across the plain

Bears the soft tang of smudge-smoke in its breath;
There is no sudden cry of pain,
Nor horror of cold eye-balls fixed in death.

And can it be so fair a moon

Can smile unmoved on scenes of war's debauch?
That Europe, too, has still her June,

And o'er her shambles bright stars watch?
That soft winds over Flanders' field

Fondle young locks like mother-fingers gone,
And the red dew of youth is sealed

On garden leaf and grass that once was lawn?

Oh faithless Nature! Man, your child,
Writhes in a strife he neither sought nor knew;
But some blind impulse, aimless, wild,
Grinds him in dust before your placid view;
His quaking faith would read the stars
And find some hope not shattered at its base,
But all the heavens shout for Mars,
And a hard smile sits on the cold moon's face.

TO FRANCE

WE little knew thee, France; we thought—
And God forgive us that our thought was sin—
We thought thee fair without, and false within;
And did not seek to know thee as we ought.

We knew the face thou turnest tourist-ward;
The painted face, the sensuous design;
We held thy virtue subtle as thy wine,
As cheap and subtle; neighbor, we have erred.

For thou hadst poured thy life in every mould
And we had found the mould of our desire;
We warmed our marrows at thy Latin fire
And found it hot, for we were Saxon-cold.

Forgive us, France; we passed the lie along:
“A thoughtless people, frivolous and gay;”
And now we know thee; we can only say
Forgive us, France; we sinned; we did thee wrong.

How well thy sons have risen to thy need
No art can picture on the printed page;
But hoary Time shall beckon, age to age,
The deeds of France, for France is great indeed.

And that black lust that would thy virtue rape
And set a ransom on thy bruised head:—
Its spawnings rot among the countless dead,
And all its land is wrapped in tears and crepe.
And thou hast suffered; who shall count the toll?
Thy cup of grief shall silently endure;
But thy great spirit riseth white and pure,
For France is still a nation and a soul!

WHY DON'T THEY CHEER?

"WHY don't they cheer," the stranger said,
"Why don't they cheer when the troops go out?"
He thought our hearts were cold or dead
Because we raised nor song nor shout.

But we had known them in the past,
That ancient past when peace we knew;
And all our hearts were heavy-cast,
And all our eyes were wet with dew.

Yon lad—he is a farmer's son,
And yon—his work was in a store,
And yon—he only joined for fun,
He'd never been from home before.

And yon—his hair is streaked with grey,
He heard the call and knew the cost;
With calm resolve he joins the fray
That younger lives may not be lost.

No dress parade is this to-day;
No skirmish with the lesser lands;
Red-fangéd war obstructs the way
And murder crouches where he stands.

No boast is ours as out they go,
For God forbid our boast were bold;
The end we hope, but cannot know,
Is His to hasten or withhold.

We only watch our marching men
With silent confidence aflame,
For though they may not come again
Sharp is their steel and true their aim.

"Why don't they cheer?" the stranger said,
When hearts too full for cheap acclaim
Were beating to their martial tread
The deathless honor of their name.

IN THE WHEAT

His wheat is golden for the harvest blade;
Amid its ranks red prairie roses blow;
And by the fringe his little maid
Trips in and out; she is too young to know

He left his binder canvased in the shed;
He left her mother, weeping, at the gate;
His harvest yields a richer red
And shouts for reapers; other fields can wait.

When in the Spring across the fragrant mould
His seeder-shuttle wrought a richer zone,
He did not dream how much a year can hold
Nor what a field should ripen with his own.

His care was all for simple, selfish things,—
His home, his wife, his horses, and his child;
No thought had he for conquerors and kings,
Or reeking power and innocence defiled.

Then in an hour his soul was born again;
He saw himself the nation's instrument;
She felt a pride that smothered half the pain
As through her tears she nodded her assent.

His wheat is red for harvest, but his blade
Is red with richer harvest at his feet;
And in his eyes, clear, calm, and unafraid
He sees a maiden playing in the wheat.

THE VETERANS

You shouted for your heroes when they marched away
to war,

And your eyes were wet for those they left behind;
You were loud in declamations on the Cause they
battled for,

And to any imperfection you were blind;
They sprang from field and counter and from every
kind of trade;

You were proud of them in khaki when the blaring
bugles brayed;

You were half apologetic for the fact that you had
stayed

While the flag of Britain beckoned in the wind.

You read the glowing tributes to their valor at the
front

As they battered on the very gates of hell;

You could close your eyes and see them as they bore
the battle's brunt,

And you wished that you had played your part as
well;

You could see their bloody bay'nets in the pyrotechnic
flare—

You could hear the crash of battle—you could hear
them shout and swear

As they swept the reeking trenches—God, you wished
that you were there—

And you'd count it greater glory if you fell!

Now their fighting days are finished and some are
coming back,
But they don't fit in as easy as of yore;
They have learned to shoot and parry, they can meet
and beat attack,
But they cannot do the things they did before;
They could hold the broken trenches in the high ex-
plosive rain,
They didn't mind the danger—they didn't mind the
pain—
They were in it for the finish—now they're coming
back again,
And they're hoping for a welcome at the door.

There are those who didn't muster when they heard
the bugles play,
Though they claimed to feel the patriotic flame,
They couldn't leave their business, and it's not for us
to say
That they didn't do their part to play the game;
But the soldier is returning, minus eye, or lung, or
limb;
He is back from war's abysses, though he tottered on
the brim;
He saved his blooming country; *will his country now
save him,*
Or will it drown its glory in its shame?

THE VISITOR

HE stood beside me in the night,
When darkness laid its magic on my eyes;
By some swift miracle of sight—
Some spirit-vision, I surmise—
He stood beside me in the night.

I knew him well when we were boys;
We played together in the dawn of life;
The years have mingled strange alloys
With golden friendships, but the strife
Had left us true, as we were boys.

I had not heard of him for years,
Except a letter at long intervals,
And such a rumor as one hears
From chance acquaintance; we were pals
Who trusted friendship to the years.

We never talked about it much;
Perhaps we never mentioned it at all;
I don't remember; he was such
A decent chap, there was no call
To talk about our friendship much.

But I remember things we said
And plans we laid for days when we were men:
Poor plans! Could we have seen ahead
We might have been less happy then—
Perhaps have laughed at things we said.

And then the war: I saw his name
With others who had heard their country's call:
In boyhood days no vision came
Of such a summons, yet withal
He answered, for I saw his name.

No warlike nature spurred him on,
For he was gentle as the summer sun,
And hated strife; and yet there shone
Through all his moods a fiery one,
And Truth and Justice spurred him on.

He stood beside me in the night;
I might have reached and held his hand in mine,
It was so human; but the sight
Was less of human than divine,
What time I saw him in the night.

My couch was far from foreign strand,
But there he laid him down forevermore;
Yet not him down; I saw him stand;
I might have held him by the hand;
His same old boyish look he wore.
They posted him among the dead;
They think he sleeps in Flanders' loam;
He visited with me instead;
He called on me while going home.

HE SLEEPS IN FLANDERS

HE sleeps in Flanders. Well he sleeps,
For Flanders' sleep is deep indeed;
About his bed the trench-rat creeps;
In some far home a woman weeps;
And the lone moon its vigil keeps
Above his sleep in Flanders.

No note shall break the silent sleep
That found him when his day was done;
No note is blown so loud and deep
That it can pierce the gates of sleep—
The earthen gates full damp and deep—
That guard his sleep in Flanders.

He saw not where his path should lead,
Nor sought a path to suit his will;
He saw a nation in her need;
He heard the cause of Honor plead;
He heard the call, he gave it heed,
And now he sleeps in Flanders.

Yet let this ray of light remain,
Though darkness cut him from our view;
We know the sacrifice, the pain—
We cannot feel our faith is vain—
We know the loss, but not the gain
Of those who sleep in Flanders.

THE DRAGON

A DRAGON slew a splendid child
And gloried in the shameful act;
A noble hound, by nature mild,
Was stirred to horror by the fact;
Though far out-matched in strength and skill,
His honor boded no restraint;
He swore the dragon he would kill,
And with it kill its poison-taint.

In such a battle as the world
Had never seen, the two engaged;
The dragon all its furies hurled,
But could not win the war it waged;
The hound, though faint from idle days,
Revived the spirit of his past;
He fought beyond all words of praise,
And choked the reptile dead at last.

Then homeward as the victor comes
The noble hound his footsteps turned,
But now to all the sound of drums
A strange consuming in him burned;
His eyes were red with battle's flame,
His teeth were red with battle's gore;
Men said the hound was not the same
As he had been before the war.

And then a deeper horror grew;
The hound was knarled and bent and dread;
The dragon's form alone he slew,
The dragon's soul was his instead!
And men looked on it in dismay
And cried, "Alas for pride of race;
The hound which did the dragon slay
Is now a dragon in its place!"

THE SOLDIER'S WIFE

I SEE them walking arm in arm
Where moonlight falls athwart the trees;
They walk secure from war's alarm;
The war, they say, is overseas.

The night-wind beats up from the South,
And warm the thoughts that beat in me;
And words that once were in his mouth
Are whispering from my shelter-tree.

We weighed our sacrifice, we thought;
We counted what its price would be;
I knew the pain, the strain, but not
The longing that envelops me.

Now would I seize him back again,
Now—for an hour—one hour of bliss;
To-night—who knows?—but hope is vain
And pulseless as his phantom-kiss.

The bee his honey-flower will sip;
The moon reveals, by some mischance,
The lovers leaning lip to lip . . .
Ah, God . . . but he's in France.

THE ATTACHED

HE sat within his garden wall,
His children played about his knee;
Sudden he heard a bugle call,
A bugle blast without the wall;—
Why don't the young go first? said he.

His children filled his heart with pride
For they were young and good to see;
He heard the bugle call outside,
A bugle call that twinged his pride;—
Why don't the young go first? said he.

His house was large, his grounds were fair
His wife, a comely wife was she;
She twined her fingers in his hair,
And life was sweet, and life was fair;—
Why don't the young go first? said he.

He filled a goodly place in town,
His office hours were nine to three;
One only question would not down;
Alike in country and in town
Why don't the young go first? said he.

The moonlight fell across his bed;
The summer perfumes filtered free;
In dreams he saw the ghastly dead;
The terror seized him in his bed;—
Why don't the young go first? said he.

He met with others of his kind;
On this, at least, did all agree;
'Twas hard for them to stay behind,
But war is war (and Fate is kind)
We'll let the young go first, said he.

THE UNATTACHED

He had no house, nor home, nor lands;
All skies alike were kin to him;
His only fortune was his hands;
He had no house, nor home, nor lands,
And none had ever been to him.

The summer sun glowed hot upon
The sweat-drops on the head of him;
His muscle-cords were hard and drawn,
And hot the hot sun beat upon
The task that earned the bread of him.

Nor car, nor couch, nor wife, nor child,
Nor maiden fair was aught to him;
No future beckoned and beguiled,
No hope of car, or couch, or child,
By any chance was wrought to him.

No stately house upon the hill,
No bungalow was built for him;
Of sodden food he had his fill—
No banquet board upon the hill—
No Burgundy was spilt for him.

In peace we held him nothing worth
However he might try for it;
In war, the nation of his birth
Perceived in him the soul of worth
And sent him forth—to die for it.

THE SUBMARINE

WHEN in the dawn of farthest Time
The Spirit on the waters moved,
And living creatures of the slime
The travailing Infinite approved;
When Chaos bore the jungle brute,
And Ocean spawned her monster brood,
And He beheld the living fruit
And in His wisdom called it good—

Could He have known the mighty deep
To birth a baser brood would bring—
Of all the things that swim or creep
The foulest, falsest, cruelest thing
That, stealing through the water-shade
Sent aimless death where'er it could—
Would He at all the world have made,
Or, having made it, call it good?

The babe her idle tears may weep;
The salt sea mingles tears with hers;
There's mercy in the surging deep
But not among her murderers;
The mother clasps her child in death,
And sinks beneath the sobbing wave;
The empty bubbles of her breath
A moment serve to mark her grave.

Oh Man, that hast subdued the sea,
And measured heaven with a span,
The gods take counsel over thee,
Untamed, untold, unbounded Man!
Thy depth is equal to thy height,
Thy baseness infinitely base;
Thy blackness shows all other white,
Apostate and accursed race!

PRODIGAL STILL

THE Prodigal Son has turned his face
To his Father's house and his Fatherland,
And he seats himself in the highest place,
And the viands are served at his command;
His face is fair and his heart is free—
And great is its burden of good or ill—
But little of reverence bringeth he,
For the Prodigal Son is prodigal still.

The Prodigal Son comes not in rags,
Nor stained with the tears of a sad estate;
He comes with a flourish of foreign flags,
He comes in the pride of the newly-great;
His purse is fat and his arm is strong,
And if he sin he will pay the bill;
He brings his creed of Right and Wrong;
For the Prodigal Son is a prodigal still.

The Prodigal Son at the Father's board
Feasts as only a prodigal can;
He knows where the richest wines are stored,
And he helps himself—as becomes a man;
And the Brother may look with eye askance
At his kinsman's nerve and his kinsman's will
As he drops the Sure to seize the Chance,
For the Prodigal Son is a prodigal still.

The Prodigal Son has come to say,
And Father and Brother must face the fact;
And him they cannot coerce they may
Convert by generous, graceful tact;
The heat in the blood must run its course;
The fever must burn or the fever will kill;
Loyalty never yet came by force:—
And the Prodigal Son is a prodigal still.

HEROES OF PEACE

(Capt. Robert F. Scott and party.)

Not to the wreck of crashing shell,
Not to the boastful bugle's breath;
Not as our war-made heroes fell,
Fell they, in the uttermost gates of death;
Hungered, and lone, in the ice-swept zone,
They died to the bleak wind's monotone.

Not in the war of man and man,
Not in the red, blood-heat of strife;
Not where the blasts of hatred fan
The baser hearts at the price of life;
Solemn and great, they sat with Fate,
And, knowing the end, dared still—to wait!

What did they seek in that manless land?
Glory or gold, or rich estate?
Nought: but they heard their God's command
Which bids our Britain still be great!
British—and mad—they could die, and be glad,
While the wild wastes wept for them, weirdly
sad.

THE EMPIRE BUILDERS

Not only where the shrapnel rips
The quaking earth in gory ruts,
The while the crimson life-blood drips
From mangled flesh and livid cuts,
And thirsty blades drink to the hilt—
Not only there are nations built.

Not only where the hungry wave
Reflects the wreck of crashing steel,
And naked seamen, grim and brave,
Fight on, from furnace-room to wheel:
Though these the Empire's bulwarks be,
The Empire is not on the sea.

Where'er Endeavor bares her arm
And grapples with the Things To Be,
At desk or counter, forge or farm,
On veldt or prairie, land or sea,
And men press onward, undismayed,
The Empire Builder plies his trade.

EAST AND WEST

SAID the West to the East of a nation,
 "The fruit of your loins am I,
And I claim no other birthright
 And I own no other tie
But the bond that is fixed between us,
 And the blood that is yours and mine—
Yet nurture the child that is born you,
 Ere other arms entwine."

And the West, in his youthful vigor,
 Wrought earnestly, soon and late,
As he planted the seeds of Empire,
 And knotted the thongs of Fate;
And the East in her home at the Gateway
 Mused long o'er the problem deep,
For the harvest was ripe to the sickle,
 But the reapers were fast asleep!

And she said, "In my western vineyard,
 Where the hope of my future lies,
Where those from my hearth are scattered,
 And a nation must soon arise—
I have more to fear than the foeman
 Who comes with a hostile heel,
For the gold of an alien people
 Drives deeper than sharpest steel!

“If the land that was bought with a purchase—
And the purchase has well been paid—
If the hope of my children’s children
And the mainstay of my trade
Be mine, and be mine forever,
I must quibble not at the cost,
Lest the chance of my future greatness
Through my own neglect be lost!”

MANHOOD'S ESTATE

*(Suggested by the transference of British fortresses in
Canada to Canadian garrisons.)*

YOUTH must lean on the mother's arm and obey the
mother's will:

But manhood faces the world alone,

And bends its ways till they fit his own:

Yet manhood honors his mother's name, and loves
his mother still.

Some said—but they spoke in ignorance, and in words
of little weight—

“The child must be a child until he reach a man's
estate;

But when Ambition flaunts before, and Duty lags
behind,

Maternal regulations he will scatter to the wind.”

But the mother smiled at the foolish speech, for she
knew that her child was true;

And she said, “The things that I wish of him are
the things that my son will do;

I pronounce his absolute liberty, I remove my slightest
ban,

And I give him the keys of a continent, with the
bidding, ‘Be a man!’ ”

Youth must lean on the mother's arm and obey the
mother's will:

But manhood faces the world alone,

And bends its ways till they fit his own:

Yet manhood honors his mother's name, and loves
his mother still.

THE MIXER

THEY are fresh from all creation, from the lands
beyond the seas,
Where a man accepts existence by the grace of "if
you please,"
From the homes of rank and title, from the slums
of want and woe,
They are coming as the cattle that have nowhere
else to go;
They are haggard, huddled, homeless, frightened at—
they know not what;
With a few unique exceptions they're a disappoint-
ing lot;
But I take 'em as I get 'em, soldier, sailor, saint and
clown,
And I turn 'em out Canadians—all but the yellow
and brown.

Oh, I take 'em from the counter, the factory, the
mine,
They are rough-and-ready rascals till I lick 'em into
line;
They are coming, coming, coming, from the land of
Who-Knows-Where,
Black and white and many-tinted, brown and yellow,
dark and fair;

They are coming from the valley, from the prairie,
from the hill,
They are coming from the "May I?" to the country
of "I Will";
And for some the smart of failure, and for some
achievement's crown,
As I roll 'em out Canadians—all but the yellow and
brown.

In my new-made, day-old cities I apply them to the
test,
Where they mix and clash and scramble with the
Spirit of the West;
With the lust of gain before them, and the lust of
sin within,
Where a few go down the deeper, but the many rise
and win;
Where the sons of men are equal in the eyes of
other men,
And the man who falls defeated rises up to fight
again:
I mix 'em, mix 'em, mix 'em, in the turmoil of the
town,
As I turn 'em out Canadians—all but the yellow and
brown.

And I take 'em in the forest, where the axes bite the
tree,
And I school 'em in the building of this country of
the free;
In the vermin-glutted bunk-house they will spend the
stingy nights,
Where their only recreations are the "blow-outs" and
the fights;
In the spring they're on the river, where the logs go
racing by,
And they haven't time to wonder who will be the
next to die;
There are some will ride in safety while the others
quietly drown,
As I turn 'em out Canadians—all but the yellow and
brown.

In the camps of railway builders you will find 'em
by the score,
Where a man is set to doing things he never saw
before,
Where they set the greenhorn handling glycerine and
dynamite—
Just a stumble or a mishap and it blows him out of
sight—

Where the Yankee fights with fire-arms and the Dago
with his knife,
And a little bit of banter may cost a man his life;
Where they learn to reach for weapons at the signal
of a frown—
There I turn 'em out Canadians—all but the yellow
and brown.

In the silent, sunlit prairies they are list'ning to the
call
That is calling, calling, calling, "Come you up, why
will you fall?
Here is pay for every worker, here's reward for
honest toil,
And a man may grow to heaven if his roots are in
the soil."
They are putting off the old things, they are trying
on the new;
In the battle with conditions they are proving what
is true;
They are earnest, they are hopeful, and no hand can
hold them down,
As I roll 'em out Canadians—all but the yellow and
brown.

In the great, big, white-walled winter, when the soul
cries out in dread—
In the nameless dread of winter, when the summer
hopes are dead—
When the thoughts turn backward, backward, to the
land beyond the sea,
And the weak ones and the false ones would renounce
their faith in me—
Then I curse them, starve them, freeze them, until
every naked bone
Rattles in the howling blizzard, "I accept you as my
own."
In the sacrament of suffering their memories I drown,
As I roll them out Canadians—all but the yellow and
brown.

In the city, on the prairie, in the forest, in the camp,
In the mountain-clouds of color, in the fog-white
river-damp,
From Atlantic to Pacific, from the Great Lakes to
the Pole,
I am mixing strange ingredients into a common
whole;

Every hope shall build upon me, every heart shall
be my own,
The ambitions of my people shall be mine, and mine
alone;
Not a sacrifice so great but they will gladly lay it
down
When I turn them out Canadians—all but the yellow
and brown.

MOTHER AND SON

THE mother was rich and gracious, and the son was
strong and bold,
And the bond that was fixed between them was not
the bond of gold;
And they dwelt in sweet co-union, while the world
looked on in awe,
For they lived and wrought by the law of Love, and
not by the love of Law.

The mother was old in the years of man, but young
in the years of time,
And her face was fair and her arm was strong as a
strong man in his prime;
And some who said, "She weakens, her day is nearly
done,"
So spake because they wished it. Her day was scarce
begun.

And the mother said, "I have given you much, good
gifts of honest worth:—
A name that is known and honored in the corners
of the earth;
A tongue that is strong and elastic, a law that is just
and sound,
And the right of a man to be a man wherever my
flag is found.

“The paths go down to the future, and the paths
are yours to choose;
There’s all for you to profit, there’s all for me to
lose—
For the eye of the race is onward, nor yet is the law
recast,
That Youth shall live in the future, and Age shall
live in the past.”

On the swarthy cheek of the stalwart son there deep-
ened a dye of shame:—

“Mother, were I so base I should belie my mother’s
name;

The road may lead to the mountain-tops or the nether-
most depths of hell;

Even so; and if so you travel it, I travel the road
as well.

“Ere yet I had learned in a foreign tongue to babble
your name with pride,

They thought in the guise of a common cause to
wheel me from your side,

But I scorned the bribe of lust and power—for I
read the rogues aright—

And I fought for you in my swaddling-clothes as
only a child can fight

“ ’Twas not for my own existence—I had no fear
for that—
For I was lean and unlikely, and they were full and
fat;
But the blood—and the sense of honor—and the duty
of the son—
’Twas these that clutched at a weapon and battled
them ten to one!

“Think not because life is rosy that I know not what
it cost—
I knew when I fell to the Ridgeway horde, or lay in
the North-shore frost;
I knew in the flush of triumph—I knew when I
fought in vain—
And the blood that was spilled at Paardeberg was
the blood of Lundy’s Lane!

“Then lead, and your son will follow, or follow, and
he will lead,
And side by side, though the world deride, we will
show by word and deed
That you share with me my youthfulness, and I with
you your prime,
And so it shall be till the sun shall set on the utter-
most edge of Time.”

THE MAN OF THE HOUSE

*Sweet is the breath of the prairie, where peace and
prosperity reign,
And joyous the song of the city, where all is expan-
sion and gain;
And gay are the waves of the ocean, as they break on
the beaches in vain,
And happy the land that preserves them.*

“I ask you not for a farthing, nor gift of the mea-
sure of gold;
The Man of the House should see to the house and
summon his own household;
For his is the peace of its shelter, and his is the
strength of its wall,
And his is the shame and the ruin if ever the edifice
fall.

“On you—not the younger children—on you does
the mantle descend,
To me you must be as a brother, to them as a father
and friend;
On the Pay-Day of Retribution, when earth is in
battle arrayed,
You shall rally your kin to the fighting, and no one
shall make you afraid.

“Full long have you lain in the nursing, full long
have you sucked at the breast,
The world is awaiting your coming, it faces itself
to the West;
And not by the pain of compulsion, nor the ravings
of those who condemn,
But because of the blood that is in you, you shall
stand as a leader of men!”

*Bloody the breast of the prairie when torn with the
trenches of hate,
Gory the streets of the city where murder and treach-
ery wait,
And awful the terrors of ocean when aimed at the
life of the State—
Unhappy the land that deserves them!*

THE CHARITY WARD*

*It's well to boast of Empire and brag of Britain's
might,
Is't well to sing of her soldiers or hurry them into
the fight,
Is't well to raise your anthem for the King upon
his throne,
While ye leave the Mother Country to bear the load
alone?*

Many the winds that rise and fall to the flag that ye
call your own,
And ye walk secure to the ends of earth wherever
that flag is known;
Safe as a child in its mother's arms ye come and ye
go at will,
And ye take it all for granted—and your Mother pays
the bill.

Never a wave that beats your shore but knows her
floating steel,
Never a sand in your harbor fronts but knows her
iron keel,
Never a child in your inland towns but lisps of her
"hearts of oak,"
And the breath that ye breathe as the air of God is
thick with her sulphur-smoke.

*First published in 1908.

Truly ye come of a nation, sired of an unwhipped
breed,
Girding yourself with vigor, virile in thought and
deed,
Tracking the trackless future, making its hopes your
own
As ye reap the fruit—the peace and power—the
Motherland hath sown.

Truly ye love your Mother—never more loyal word
Than boast ye make of Britain by British ear was
heard—
Valiant are ye, and haughty, mighty in speech and
song,
But ye turn your eyes to heaven when the hat is
passed along.

Dreaming your dreams and visions—making your
dreams come true—
Offering not of your substance, offering words in
lieu—
Large in your little dealings, small in your great
affairs,
Proud of the land that bore ye, but blind to the load
she bears.

Ye give of your blood on occasion—and royal and
clean the gift—

But ye know the load is heavy and ye do not stoop
to lift;

And hers is all the burden, and yours is all the
shame—

The charity-ward of the Empire, a nation only in
name!

*Is't well to boast of Empire and brag of Britain's
might,*

*Is't well to sing of her soldiers or hurry them into
the fight,*

*Is't well to raise your anthem for the King upon his
throne,*

*While ye leave the Mother Country to bear the load
alone?*

THE SEER

IN the dingy dusk of his deerskin tent sat the chief
 of a dying race,
And the lake that lapt at his wigwam door threw
 back a frowning face,
And a sightless squaw at the centre-pole crooned
 low in a hybrid speech,
When a man of God swept round the point and
 landed on the beach.

The heavy eyes grew bright with fire, the lips shaped
 to a sneer—

“Welcome, my paleface brother, what good news
 brings you here?

Are you come with the voice of healing, with the
 book of your blameless breed,

To soothe my soul with comfort while my body
 gnaws with need?

“Welcome, O paleface brother; come, what have
 you to fear?

Mayhap the redskin chieftain can teach as well as
 hear;

And while we sing your sacred songs and breathe
 your mystic prayer,

Who knows what inspiration may come on the
 ev'ning air? . . .

"Listen; you are a scholar, schooled in the paleface
lore:

'Tis said a dying saint may sometimes see the shin-
ing shore;

That closing eyes peer far beyond the realm of
mortal sight,—

Who knows but that a dying race may read the road
aright?

"A dying race! We know it; the land is ours no
more,

No more we roam the prairies as in the days of yore;
The brave, free spirit that was ours is crushed and
passed away,

And bodies without spirits are predestined to decay.

"No matter. In the summertime the flowers bloom
in the grass,

The startled insects flood the fields and chirrup as
you pass,

The birds sing in the bushes; but before the wintry
blast

The flowers and the insects and the little birds are
past.

“Yet once again the spring will come, the flowers
will bloom again,
And insects chirrup blithely where the former ones
are lain;
The white snows of the wintertime will vanish in
the heat,
And out-door life and color will follow their defeat.

“Can the paleface read the riddle? Has he eyes to
see the signs?
Or thinketh he that snow will lie forever on the
pines?
That housed-up life can triumph for the mastery of
state,
Or cushioned chairs produce a race destined to dominate?

“Behold, the things your hands have done, the power
your arts have won—
Behold, these things shall vanish as the snow before
the sun;
The snow that smothered out the red—ah, hear it
if you can—
Shall leave the earth as suddenly, *and leave it brown
and tan.*

“Hear ye a little lesson—surely ye know its worth—
Only an out-door nation can be master of the earth;
Soon as ye seek your couches, soft with the spoils
of trade—

See well to your outer trenches before the mines are
laid!

“Hear ye a little lesson—can ye the truth divine?
Milk ye may mix with water, and water will mix with
wine;

Mix as ye may on your prairies, mix in your hope,
and toil,

But know in all your mixing that water won't mix
with oil!”

In the dingy dusk of his deerskin tent sat the chief
of a dying race,

And the glow of holy prophecy lit up his rugged
face,

And the fading light of the setting sun fell far on
an eastern land,—

*And who shall save the paleface if he will not under-
stand?*

PRAIRIE BORN

WE have heard the night wolf howling as we lay
alone in bed;
We have heard the grey goose honking as he jour-
neyed overhead;
We have smelt the smoke-wraith flying in the hot
October wind,
And have fought the fiery demon that came roaring
down behind;
We have seen the spent snow sifting through the
key-hole of the door,
And the frost-line crawling, crawling, like a snake,
along the floor;
We have felt the storm-fiend wrestle with the rafters
in his might,
And the baffled blizzard shrieking through the tur-
moil of the night.

We have felt the April breezes warm along the
plashy plains;
We have mind-marked to the cadence of the falling
April rains;
We have heard the crash of water where the snow-
fed rivers run,
Seen a thousand silver lakelets lying shining in the
sun;

We have known the resurrection of the springtime
in the land,
Heard the voice of Nature calling and the words of
her command,
Felt the thrill of spring-time twilight and the vague,
unfashioned thought
That the season's birthday musters from the hopes
we had forgot.

We have heard the cattle lowing in the silent summer nights;
We have smelt the smudge-fire fragrance—we have
seen the smudge-fire lights—
We have heard the wild duck grumbling to his mate
along the bank;
Heard the thirsty horses snorting in the stream from
which they drank;
Heard the voice of Youth and Laughter in the long,
slow-gloaming night;
Seen the arched electric splendor of the Great North's
livid light;
Read the reason of existence—felt the touch that
was divine—
And in eyes that glowed responsive saw the End of
God's design.

We have smelt the curing wheat-fields and the scent
of new-mown hay;
We have heard the binders clatter through the dusty
autumn day;
We have seen the golden stubble gleaming through
the misty rain;
We have seen the plow-streaks widen as they turned
it down again;
We have heard the threshers humming in the cool
September night;
We have seen their dark procession by the straw-
piles' eerie light;
We have heard the freight-trains groaning, slipping,
grinding, on the rail,
And the idle trace-chains jingle as they jogged along
the trail.

We have hopes to others foreign, aims they cannot
understand,
We, the "heirs of all the ages," we, the first-fruits
of the land;
Though we think with fond affection of the shores
our fathers knew,
And we honor all our brothers—for a brother's heart
is true—

Though we stand with them for progress, peace, and
unity, and power,
Though we die with them, if need be, in our nation's
darkest hour—
Still the prairies call us, call us, when all other
voices fail,
And the call we knew in childhood is the call that
must prevail.

THE OLD GUARD

KNEW you the men of the Old Guard? Men of the
camp and trail;
Guard of the van when Time began in the land of
grass and gale,
Of a sky-wide land they seized command where the
mightiest prevail.

Who were the men of the Old Guard? Giants of
strength and will,
Trained in the school of hard-luck rule and daring
to die or kill,
Staking their lives, and their young, and wives, on
the road up Fortune's hill.

Whence were the men of the Old Guard? Heroes
of 'Eighty-two,
From swamp and ledge and ocean's edge they came
to see and do,
And they failed at first, and the land they cursed, but
they stayed and struggled through.

Hope of the men of the Old Guard? Little but
hope was theirs;
With empty hand in an untried land they clutched
at wheat and tares,
And home at night by the wood-fire light was
answer to their prayers.

Way of the men of the Old Guard? What of their
end and way?

You may find their bones by the lime-white stones
where the sun-dried sleugh-holes lay,

For the Goddess Trade is a costly jade, and they
were the ones to pay.

Joy of the men of the Old Guard? The joy of the
brave and true;

With joy they paced where Death grimaced and his
icy vapors blew,

And with steady tread they bore their dead with the
faith of the chosen few.

What of the men of the Old Guard? Ask of the
arching skies,

The grass that waves on their leafy graves is lisp-
ing their lullabyes,

And the lives they spent are their monument and
their title to Paradise.

THE MOTHERING

I HAD lain untrod for a million years from the line
to the Arctic sea;
I had dreamed strange dreams of the vast unknown,
Of the lispig wind and the dancing zone
Where the Northland fairies' feet had flown,
And it all seemed good to me.

At the close of a thousand eons of sleep came a pang
that was strange to me;
The pang of a new life in my breast,
The swell of a vast and a vague unrest,
And it thrilled my soul from East to West
As it fluttered to be free.

But I steeled my heart to the biped thing; of vast
presumption he:
He would lure my lonely thoughts away,
He would sport himself on the sacred clay
Where the dust of the prehistoric lay;
But he scorned the soul of me.

So I stretched my plains for a thousand leagues from
the mountains to the sea;
But he rolled them back with a steel-laid line,
And he crumpled space by man's design,
And he filled his life with the breath of mine;
But his love he gave not me.

Then I called him foes from the farthest North and
the snowflake fluttered free;
But he took him trees I had given birth,
And he dived him coal from my bowels of earth,
And he laughed at me as he sat in mirth;
But he cursed the cold of me.

Then I cut him off from his fellow-men that his
thought might turn to me;
But he strung him a line of copper thread,
And his fire-shod words swung overhead,
By the fiend of air his thought was spread
O'er hill, and plain, and lea.

Then I gave him hopes he could not define and fears
that he could not flee;
And he heard my cry in the long, still night,
In my spirit-thrall I held him tight,
And his blind soul-eyes craved for the light;
But the light he could not see.

So I held my peace till I saw him sit with children at
his knee;
And I sent them the sun and the wind and the rain,
And the ferny slope and the flowery plain,
And the wet night-smell of the growing grain;
And their love they gave to me.

In the last race-birth of the sons of men a travail
holdeth me:

But out of the night of pain and tears
A new life comes with the rolling years;
And I fondle the child of my hope and fears,
And it seemeth good to me.

THE SILENT SHIPS

OUT where the ocean meets the sky and the sky sits on
the rim,
Where the sea mists fall and the sea birds fly and the
sea rolls grey and grim,
And the dank fog lies ilke a cloud of night where the
sullen waters flow,
The silent ships, the silent ships, the ships of England
go.

They drink the reek of the washing waves when the
gale whines to the shore,
At equal ease though the soft sea laves or the boiling
breakers roar;
Gaunt and grey as the hand of death, as the hand of
death are they,
And their long lines lie across the sky as they wait for
the toasted "Day."

No fishing smack is the prize they seek, no schooner
coasting by;
Whene'er the guns of Britain speak 'tis fighting men
that die;
The child may sleep in his crib secure while up the briny
deep
The silent ships, the silent ships, the ships of England
sweep.

Not theirs the lot to strike and run, not theirs to fight
and flee;

Their heavy duty must be done—'tis theirs to hold the
sea;

In storm and stress, in cloud and rain, in darkness or
in light

They hold the sea, the cold black sea, the wild sea
raging white!

That British men may lie at ease, that British sleep be
sound,

On all the paths of seven seas the silent ships are found;
When through the fastness of the night their wireless
warnings leap

The silent ships, the silent ships, are holding well the
deep.

Not silent shall they always be; at length the silent fleet
Shall wake the echoes of the sea when foe and foemen
meet;

And steel for steel and shot for shot the fleet shall
freely give

The price we pay for liberty, the price we pay to live.

Oh Nelson, Drake and Frobisher, Oh men who made
us free,

In days of mighty need you were the masters of the
sea;

And masters still thy sons shall be when through the
storm and reek

The silent ships, the silent ships, the ships of England
speak!

THE SCHOOL-MA'AM

No hope of worldly gain is hers,
A yokel's wages for her hire,
And every throb of self's desire
Resigned to childish worshippers.

A tiny school her citadel,
A fenceless acre her domain,
Her life a sacrifice; her gain,
The gain of those she serves so well.

And growing down our country's page,
The beauty of her sacrifice
Shall glow again in other eyes,
And mutiply from age to age.

The mothers of the race to be
Shall live her tenderness anew,
And her devotion shall imbue
The sons who keep our country free.

She gains no flagrant, pompous prize,
But men who move the world's affairs
Shall snatch a moment from their cares
To think of her with moistened eyes.

The conquerors of hostile lands,
The hearts the nation's burdens bear,
To-morrow's lords of earth and air,
To-day are moulded in her hands.

The lightest trifle from her lips
May charge some soul with fertile seed
That in the hour of direst need
Shall save the nation from eclipse.

CLARENCE AND JOHN

I ENVY no man what he fairly wins;
In Life's hard battle each must fight his fight;
But some, methinks, are honored for their sins
And some ignored because they do the right;
Some seem to find their fortune ready-made,
And others miss it, howsoe'er desired—
The man's a fool who thinks that he can grade
Society by what it has acquired:
The noblest souls are often least renowned;
In humble homes God's greatest men are found.

I

Clarence and John were brothers; sons
Of honest, working pioneers;
Together, in their early years
They chased the gopher in his furrow-track,
And herded cows, and forked across the stack,
And bravely shouldered muzzle-loading guns,
And crouched where rushes grew beside the stream
Till silver stars came out o'er all the sky;
Whatever one did, would the other try;
Wherever one was, was the other near;
The neighbors said, "The boys are very dear
To one another."

Such as these would seem
Inseparable in walks of later life.

When nearing death the father summoned John,
And said, "My boy, to you, when I am gone
Your mother looks for comfort in her age;
See that she lack it not; her love your wage;
I am your father. Wisely take a wife
Of your own station; toil as I have tried,
And lift the mortgage when the crops are good;
Be to your brother all a brother should,
And send the boy to college if you can,
He has the fibre of a business man,
But you must be a farmer." Thus he died.

So Clarence went to college; John remained
And wrought a scanty living from the soil,
For times were backward, and his toil—
Though well he toiled from dawn till stars awoke—
Could scarce support them; land he broke,
And hoped the extra acreage he gained
Would raise the mortgage; oft his mother lay
In deadly illness, and the doctor's fees
And cost of Clarence at college—these,
With bills for wife and children of his own,
Well-nigh submerged him; he had older grown
By more than years; his hair was grey;
His youth was gone while he was still a youth;
But still he toiled, and strove to pay the debt,
And people thought him cold and stern, and yet
They knew him for an honest, toiling man.

From years of self-denial his health began
To fail beneath him ; all his faith and truth
Had left the farm more mortgaged than at first ;
And then in middle age he stared at Death,
And wept, and prayed the Man of Nazareth
Why it should be that he should fail in life,
And leave his helpless children and his wife
In ignorance and poverty. . . .

II.

Unversed

In all of Hardship's school, the younger son
Idled through college ; then he took the road
For a cigar house, and the skill he showed
In loading men with stock they did not need
Brought him some good commissions, which, indeed,
He spent as freely as they came, for fun
And worse. One day he bet his ring
Against a lot in some far western town
Upon the races ; when the dust was down
He found himself a winner, but forgot
About the thing for years, and when he thought
Of it again he found that it would bring
A fortune in the nation's currency.

He shortly took to wife a wealthy jade
Whose wealth alone commended her, and made
A home—if homes be built of brick and tile—
And set himself to live his life in style,
But never thought nor troubled to display
An interest in the brother he had known
In loyal days.

He freely gave
To hospitals and charities, and, save
To those who knew his inner life, he seemed
A man to be respected and esteemed.

Meanwhile his brother tilled the farm alone.

With money came ambition; Clarence sought
Such honor as his country could bestow,
And honor came him quickly; in the glow
Of middle-age he found himself admired
By such as might have been by money hired
To so admire him.

Clarence bought
The best the world could offer for his sons;
He put them in the way of growing wealth;
His wife he sent to Europe—for her health—
His daughters are the centre of a set
Of gaiety, and yet—and yet—

*I envy no man what he fairly wins;
In Life's hard battle each must fight his fight;
But some, methinks, are honored for their sins,
And some ignored because they do the right;
Some seem to find their fortune ready-made,
And others miss it, howsoever desired—
The man's a fool who thinks that he can grade
Society by what it has acquired:
The noblest souls are often least renowned;
In humble homes God's greatest men are found.*

DADDY'S HELPER

WEARILY over her ironing
 Labored a woman in grey;
The setting sun through the window-pane
 Lit with an amber ray
The marks of toil on the young-old face,
 Of Beauty by Care defiled,
And she glanced at the waiting supper,
 And sighed to her playing child—
 "Daddy's a long time coming,
 Strange that he isn't home."

Daddy had gone for the cattle
 Over the plains away,
Daddy should be returning
 Now, at the close of day;
And the little lad from the window
 Looked for the coming herds,
Then quietly stole through the open door,
 Murmuring low the words—
 "Daddy's a long time coming,
 Baby will bring him home."

Quickly the darkness gathered,
 Quickly the night came on;
Brave little boy-feet travelled
 Where they should not have gone;
Weirdly blew the west wind;

Stealthily stretched the plain;
Onward he went in the gloaming,
Murmuring the refrain—
“Daddy’s a long time coming,
Baby will bring him home.”

Darkly the river windeth
Deep in its narrow bed;
Cruel are the rocks beside it,
Sharp are the rocks o’erhead;
Slyly the night beast lurketh,
Broadly the great plain lies—
Only the stars of heaven
Know how a young life dies.

Frantic they search the prairie,
All of his day-time nooks,
Places he played at cow-boy,
All through the fields of stooks;
Frantic they seek his footmarks,
Frantic they call his name;
Back from the depths of distance,
Seeming, an answer came—
“Daddy’s a long time coming,
Baby will bring him home.”

.

Years that have lost their pleasure
 Sullenly shamble past;
Grey are the heads with sorrow,
 Bearing it to the last;
Still in the autumn evenings
 They sit in the silent air,
When a sound from the gate of Heaven
 Falls like a breath of prayer—
 "Daddy's a long time coming,
 Baby will bring him home."

LITTLE TIM TROTTER

LITTLE Tim Trotter was born in the West,
Where the prairie lies sunny and brown;
Never was, surely, so welcome a guest
In the stateliest halls of the town;
For Little Tim Trotter was thoughtful and brave,
And a lover of summer and shower,
And Little Tim Trotter took less than he gave
To the hearts that were under his power.

Little Tim Trotter would play in the sun,
Or lie in the buffalo grass,
And in fancy he saw the wild buffalo run
And the brave-riding Indians pass;
And with eyes that were deep as the infinite blue
He would picture himself at their head,
For no one so young as this hunter-man knew
That the herds and the riders were dead.

Little Tim Trotter would lie in his bed
While the fire-light played low on the floor,
And strange were the thoughts that in Little Tim's
head
Played low like the fire at the door;
The hopes that were his, and the wonders he knew;
And the yearning he had in his heart,
With the glimmering light of the future in view;
And Little Tim just at the start!

Little Tim Trotter has heard the long call,
And has answered with joy and surprise,
And the thoughts and the things that are hid from us
all

To-day are revealed to his eyes;
And he rides in the van of his buffalo herd,
Or in camp with his Indians brave;
But Little Tim Trotter speaks never a word
Through the mound of a little green grave.

KID McCANN

WHERE the farthest foothills flatten to a circle-sweep-
ing plain,
And the cattle lands surrender to the onward march
of grain,
Where the prairies stretch unbroken to the corners of
the sky,
And the foremost wheat-fields rustle in the warm winds
droning by—
There a crippled cow-boy batches in the haunts of old-
time herds;
You may listen to the story as repeated in his words:

So you never heard how I lost my leg and hobble now
on a crutch?
So far as the story relates to me it can't concern you
much,
For it's really the story of Kid McCann and the price
that a girl will pay
For the fellow she sets her fancy on, as only a woman
may;
It isn't every girl who proves her faithfulness in flames,
But fellows who listen with moistened eyes speak soft-
ly of other names.

Ned McCann owned the Double Star 'way back in the
early days;
He had come out here with a sickly wife and a kid he
hoped to raise
Where the climate suited the feeble-lunged, but life
was scarce at its brim,
Till a little mound by a prairie hill held half of the
world for him;
And his double love would have spoiled the child, had
she been like me or you,
But her only thought was for her dad and the mother
she scarcely knew.

'Course she was bred to the ranges, and before she had
reached her teens
She could straddle a nag with the best of us, and ride
in her smock and jeans
Till we all caved in, and she thought it fun to camp
with a round-up bunch,
And she shared our pillow and shared our sky and
shared our pipe and lunch,
And all of us mad in love with her, but she was only
a kid,
And she never dreamt what our feelings were, or the
love-struck things we did.

But even girls grow older, and, though always kind
and sweet,
There came a day when she realized that we were at
her feet;
But I had never spoken, nor anyone in the camp,
When in came a foreign puncher, a thoroughbred
black-leg scamp,
And we who had known her since childhood saw, in
our unbelieving eyes,
This wily sinner setting himself to carry off the prize.

Of course it couldn't be stood for, and little as I might
like,
It fell to my lot to intimate to him it was time to hike,
Which I did in straight-forward manner, in a way to
be understood,
And he looked at me with a sulky scowl that boded
none of us good;
But he did as he was ordered, to be absent before night,
And we lost his form in the shadowy East as he can-
tered out of sight.

Next day, as I rode on my cayuse, apart from the rest
of the gang,
I felt a sudden rip in my leg like a jab of a red-hot
tang,
And my horse went down below me, with my leg
crushed to the clay,
And over me leered that fiendish face, and he grinned,
and rode away;
Rode away to the eastward—I saw him fade in the
sky,
And crushed and pinned from hip to heel I counted the
hours to die.

How long I lay I could never tell, for the hours were
days to me,
Till struck with sudden terror I tore at my wounded
knee,
For the east wind carried a smoky smell, and I read in
its fiery breath
That half-a-mile of sun-dried grass was all between me
and Death;
With my hunting-knife I hacked my leg, but I couldn't
cut the bone,
So I set myself as best I could to face my fate alone.

The fire came on like a hungry fiend on the wings of
the rising wind,
And I wouldn't care to tell you all the things were in
my mind;
I saw the sun through the swirling smoke, and the blue
sky far above,
And I bade good-bye to the things of earth, and the
dearer hopes of Love;
And I figured that I had closed accounts for life's un-
certain span,
When a smoke-blind broncho galloped up, and there sat
Kid McCann!

There wasn't much time for talking, with the death-
roll in our ears,
But we sometimes live in seconds more than we could
in a thousand years,
And before I could guess her meaning she had thrown
herself on my face
And spread her leather jacket, which her warm hands
held in place;
I felt her breath in my nostrils, and her finger-tips in
my hair,
And through the roar of the burning grass I fancied
I heard a prayer.

'Twas but for a moment; the flames were gone; un-
harm'd they had passed me by;
God knows why the useless are spared to live, while
the faithful are called to die,
But the form that had sheltered me shivered, and seem-
ed to shrivel away,
And when I had raised it clear of my face I looked
into lifeless clay . . .
And darkness fell, and the world was black, and the
last of my reason fled,
And when I came to myself again I was back at the
ranch, in bed.

That was back in the Eighties, and still I am living
here;
I built this shanty on the spot; her grave is lying near;
And when at nights my nostrils sense the smoke-smell
in the air
I seem to feel her form again, and hear again her
prayer;
And then the darkness settles down and wild night-
creatures cry,
But stars come out in heaven and there's comfort in the
sky.

HUSTLIN' IN MY JEANS

YES, I'm holdin' down the homestead here an' roughin'
it a bit,

It seems the only kind o' life that I was built to fit,
For it's thirty years last summer since I staked my first
preserve,

An' I reckon on the whole I've prospered more than
I deserve;

An' my friends kep' naggin' at me for to quit this toil
an' strife,

An' to settle in the city for the balance of my life,
An' I ain't compelled to labor—I've cached a wad of
beans—

But I'm happier when I'm hustlin' on the homestead
in my jeans.

I've tried to loaf an' like it, an' I've tried to swell
about

Where the boozey run to red-eye an' the greedy run to
gout,

An' I've tried to wear a collar an' a fancy fly-net vest,
An' I've tried to think it pleasant just to sit around
an' rest;

An' I've mingled with the nabobs an' hee-hawed with
other guys
That were just as sick as I was of a life of livin' lies;
I've mingled in society an' peeked behind the scenes—
An' I'm happier when I'm hustlin' on the homestead
in my jeans.

Then I got the lust for roamin', an' I rummaged round
the earth,
An' I got a big experience an' correspondin' girth,
But the more I roved an' rambled the less I cared to
live,
An' I only kep' on goin' cause I'd no alternative;
I learned through tips an' tickets an' the jostle of the
cars
That I wouldn't trade a homestead for a continent in
Mars;
An' I bid good-bye to Fashion an' her social kings an'
queens,
An' I filed my second homestead an' I bought a pair
of jeans.

'Course it's sometimes kind o' lonely on the prairie here
alone,
When the night-time settles round you an' your
thoughts are all your own,
An' old faces flit before you like a flock o' homin' birds,

An' your heart swells with emotion that no man can
put in words,
An' you ponder on the Why-for, the Beginnin', an'
the End,
An' you know the only things worth while are Family
an' Friend—
From the trifles of existence your better judgment
weans,
An' you get the right perspective on the homestead—in
your jeans.

There are days the sweat-drops glisten on this sun-
burned hand of mine,
There are nights the joints go creakin' as I crawl to
bed, at nine,
But I hear the horses stampin' and the rap of Collie's
tail,
An' it minds me of the Eighties an' the Old Commis-
sion Trail—
Of the days we pledged our future to a land we hardly
knew,
An' the men whose brave beginnings made prosperity
for you;
There are men now worth their millions I remember
in their teens,
An' they made their start by hustlin' on the homestead,
in their jeans.

There are times when most folks figure that their life
has been a blank;
You may be a homeless hobo or director of a bank,
But the thought will catch you nappin'—catch you
sometime unawares—
That your life has been a failure, and that no one
really cares;
That the world will roll without you till the Resurrec-
tion morn,
An' that no one would have missed you if you never
had been born;
An' I give you my conclusion—all that livin' really
means
Is revealed to those who hustle on the homestead in
their jeans.

Some day I reckon I'll cash in an' file another claim
Where the wicked cease from troublin' an' the good get
in the game;
Where the pews are not allotted by the fashion of your
dress,
An' the only thing that figures is inherent manliness;
Give me no silk-spangled horses an' no silver-plated
hearse,

But let some student preacher read a bit of Scripture
verse,
An' find a sunny hillside where the water-willow
screens,
An' plant me on the homestead where I hustled—in
my jeans.

THE HEALER

YES, I'm lookin' for a preacher; say,
You know of one around this way?
What, him? More like a hustler
On a cow ranch, cattle rustler,
River driver, or such creature,
But I guess he's not a preacher.

Straight? Well, Boss, you've got me guessin',
One can never judge by dressin';
But you don't wear no hoss-collar
Showin' you're a Scripture scholar;
Still, you'll maybe do the servus
If you ain't too scared or nervous.
There's a guy fell in the furrow
Of a steam plow; had to burrow
Under sods to get him out;
He's all in, I guess, about.

Packed a quite a jag o' sin;
Scared St. Pete won't let him in;
Asked me if I'd try and rustle
Some one to give sin a tussle;
Comin'? Well, then, climb your cayuse;
See if you can get this guy loose. . . .

Well, sir, seein' is believin',
But it's sometimes most deceivin';
What you think that preacher guy did?
Looked beneath the victim's eyelid,
Listened to his respiration,
Made a churchly exclamation:
"He needs neither prayer nor purgin'—
What you want here is a surgeon!"

Not within a whole day's canter
Could we find a doc. . Instanter
That young preacher drew his knife,
Said, "He's just one chance of life;
Bring some bandages and liquor;
We'll pull him through or kill him quicker."

Then he laid him on the bed, .
And went carvin' at his head,
Cut apart some broken tissue,
Stopped the blood's "alarmin' issue,"
Spread the skull where it was dented,
Said, "He'd sure have been demented,"
Added then, the patient scanning,
"It's my first stab at trepanning."

Say, I've rode among the rangers
Since a gaffer; know the dangers
Of the foothills and the prairie;
Laughed at death; was never scary
Till I saw that preacher kid
Openin' up a human lid.

Surgeon came along next day,
Said, "Who carved him up that way?"
Pointed out the little preacher,
"Shake," he said, "I'm glad to meetcher;
Pretty good for a beginner;
Saved his life, or I'm a sinner;"
Clapped the preacher on the shoulder;
"He'll be heard of when he's older."

Never was much on religion;
Been a kind of rusty pidgeon;
Never thought of heaven or hell
'Cept as things to swear by. Well,
Took a sudden change that day
When I heard that preacher pray.

Didn't know what he was sayin';
Only knew a *Man* was prayin';
No soft-suited Sunday dooper,
No theologizin' groper,
But a man of strength and worth
Spanned the gulf 'tween heaven and earth;
Never realized till then
That religion was fer *Men*.

ALKALI HALL

WHEN Lord Landseeker came out West to have a look
around,
And spend a little money if the right thing could be
found,
He hadn't breathed the prairie air more than a day
or two
Until he was the centre of a philanthropic crew
Who sought to show His Lordship all the shortcuts
to success
(Though why they should have troubled, His Lord-
ship couldn't guess,
For each was losing money, as he candidly confest,
Which seemed to be a fashion with the dealers in the
West).

Thus His Lordship grew suspicious that his friends
would turn him down,
And he quietly bought a ticket to a little country town;
But he didn't know the message that was flashed along
the wire
To a simple country dealer in the land of his desire;
And it read: "Look out for Goggles, he'll be with you
this a.m."

And the crowd around the station—well, he merely
smiled to them,
And thought it jolly decent they'd assemble, don't-
cherknow,
And file along behind him as they followed, in a row.

The snow had fallen softly all the calm November
night,
And the morning found the prairies with a covering of
white;
But His Lordship took a citizen who "happened" in
his way,
And they drove into the country for the most part of
the day
Until they reached a section that was flat and free
from stone,
And the citizen remarked about a fellow he had known
Who offered thirty dollars for this section in the fall,
But the owner wanted forty, or he wouldn't sell at all.

Then His Lordship drove across it, and it seemed to
catch his eye,
And he whispered to the driver, "That's the section I
will buy;"
So in town they found the owner, who was very loath
to sell,

But he finally consented, if His Lordship wouldn't tell
That the price was forty dollars by the acre; this
 agreed,
A lawyer drew the papers and His Lordship got the
 deed,
And he sailed across the ocean with the satisfying
 thought
That he'd followed his own judgment in the bargain
 he had bought.

The winter snows had vanished, and the spring was
 growing late,
When Lord Landseeker came again to view his real
 estate,
And he drove out in a buggy to where his section lay,
And his heart was very happy as he smoked along the
 way
Till the section burst upon them, and he scarce believed
 his sight,
For the land lay in the sunshine, flashing back a
 snowy white
And His Lordship stooped and felt it, and he heaved
 a little sigh,
As the knowledge dawned upon him that his land
 was—*alkali*.

His Lordship did some thinking as they journeyed
back to town,
And his wonted happy features were o'ershadowed
with a frown;
But he neither crawled nor blustered, neither bluffed
nor swore nor kicked
(For the men from little England never know when
they are licked),
But he advertised for tenders for construction on the
land,
And the buildings he erected were the best he could
command;
With a hundred rooms for students, and quarters for
the staff,
And the workmen often wondered what made His
Lordship laugh!

In the papers of Old England there appeared a little
ad,
For the benefit of parents whose sons were going bad:
"Teach your boys the art of farming in the great Cana-
dian West;
Our instruction is unrivalled, our curriculum the best;
There's a grate in every chamber and a bath in every
hall,

And a full dress-suited dinner every ev'ning, free to
all;
There is tennis, polo, marksmanship, and half the day
in bed,
And we make them into farmers for a hundred pounds
a head."

.

His Lordship's college prospers, and is crowded to
the doors
With "students" playing poker while the "servants"
do the chores;
What they do not know of farming they make up in
other lines,
They are judges of tobacco and connoisseurs of wines;
They are experts at the races and at sundry other
games—
Though they wouldn't know the breeching of the har-
ness from the hames—
Though they're far from home and kindred they occa-
sion no alarm,
*That was what their parents wanted when they sent
them out to farm.*

THE SQUAD OF ONE

SERGEANT Blue of the Mounted Police was a so-so
kind of guy;

He swore a bit, and he lied a bit, and he boozed a bit
on the sly;

But he held the post at Snake Creek Bend for country
and home and God,

And he cursed the first and forgot the rest—which
wasn't the least bit odd.

Now the life of the North-West Mounted Police breeds
an all-round kind of man;

A man who can 'jug a down-South thug when he rushes
the red-eye can;

A man who can pray with a dying bum, or break up
a range stampede—

Such are the men of the Mounted Police, and such are
the men they breed.

The snow lay deep at the Snake Creek post and deep
to east and west,

And the Sergeant had made his ten-league beat and
settled down to rest

In his two-by-four that they called a "post," where
the flag flew overhead,

And he took a look at his monthly mail, and this is
the note he read:

“To Sergeant Blue, of the Mounted Police, at the post
at Snake Creek Bend,
From U.S. Marshal of County Blank, greetings to
you, my friend:
They’s a team of toughs give us the slip, though they
shot up a couple of blokes,
And we reckon they’s hid in Snake Creek Gulch, and
posin’ as farmer folks.

“They’s as full of sin as a barrel of booze, and as
quick as a cat with a gun,
So if you happen to hit their trail be first to start the
fun;
And send out your strongest squad of men and round
them up if you can,
For dead or alive we want them here. Yours truly,
Jack McMann.”

And Sergeant Blue sat back and smiled, “Ho, here is
a chance of game!
Folks ’round here have been so good that life is getting
tame;
I know the lie of Snake Creek Gulch—where I used
to set my traps—
I’ll blow out there to-morrow, and I’ll bring them in
—perhaps.”

Next morning Sergeant Blue, arrayed in farmer smock
and jeans,
In a jumper sleigh he had made himself set out for the
evergreens
That grow on the bank of Snake Creek Gulch by a
homestead shack he knew,
And a smoke curled up from the chimney-pipe to wel-
come Sergeant Blue.

“Aha, and that looks good to me,” said the Sergeant
to the smoke,
“For the lad that owns this homestead shack is East in
his wedding-yoke;
There are strangers here, and I’ll bet a farm against
a horn of booze
That they are the bums that are predestined to dangle
in a noose.”

So he drove his horse to the shanty door and hollered
a loud “Good-day,”
And a couple of men with fighting-irons came out be-
side the sleigh,
And the Sergeant said, “I’m a stranger here and I’ve
driven a weary mile;
If you don’t object I’ll just sit down by the stove in
the shack awhile.”

Then the Sergeant sat and smoked and talked of the
home he had left down East,
And the cold and the snow, and the price of land, and
the life of man and beast,
But all of a sudden he broke it off with, "Neighbors,
take a nip?
There's a horn of the best you'll find out there in my
jumper, in the grip."

So one of the two went out for it, and as soon as he
closed the door
The other one staggered back as he gazed up the nose
of a forty-four;
But the Sergeant wasted no words with him, "Now,
fellow, you're on the rocks,
And a noise as loud as a mouse from you and they'll
take you out in a box."

And he fastened the bracelets to his wrists, and his
legs with some binder-thread,
And he took his knife, and he took his gun, and he
rolled him on to the bed;
And then as number two came in, he said, "If you want
to live,
Put up your dukes and hehave yourself, or I'll make
you into a sieve."

And when he had coupled them each to each and laid
them out on the bed,
"It's cold, and I guess we'd better eat before we go,"
he said.
So he fried some pork and he warmed some beans,
and he set out the best he saw,
And they ate thereof, and he paid for it, according to
British law.

That night in the post sat Sergeant Blue, with paper
and pen in hand,
And this is the word he wrote and signed and mailed
to a foreign land:
"To U.S. Marshal of County Blank, greetings I give
to you;
My squad has just brought in your men, and the squad
was

"Sergeant Blue."

*There are things unguessed, there are tales untold, in
the life of the great lone land,
But here is a fact that the prairie-bred alone may un-
derstand,
That a thousand miles in the fastnesses the fear of the
law obtains,
And the pioneers of justice were the "Riders of the
Plains."*

THE SON OF MARQUIS NODDLE

HE is brand-new out from England, and he thinks he knows it all—

(There's a bloomin' bit o' goggle in his eye)

The "colonial" that crosses him is going to get a fall—

There's a seven-pound revolver on his thigh).

He's a son of Marquis Noddle, he's a nephew of an earl,

In the social swim of England he has got 'em all awirl,

He's as confident as Cæsar and as pretty as a girl—

Oh, he's out in deadly earnest, do or die.

They will spot him in the cities by the cowhide on his feet—

(They were built for crushing cobble-stones at 'ome)

And the giddy girls will giggle when they see him on the street—

(There's a brand-new cowboy hat upon his dome).

He has come from home and kindred to the land beyond the sea,

To the far-famed land of plenty, to the country of the free,

But he can't forget he owns it from Cape Race to Behring Sea—

He is coming just as Cæsar would to Rome.

When his pile is getting slender he'll go looking for a
job,

(And he thinks he ought to get it, don'tcherknow)
But he finds that he must mingle with the common
city mob

(How *can* they think that he would sink so low?).
So he hikes him to the country, where the rustics will
be proud

To salute him when they meet him, and to whisper,
nice and loud,

"He's the son of Marquis Noddle,—you would know
him in a crowd"—

They will pay him there the homage that they owe.

In the little country village he will manufacture
mirth—

(For it's there they take the measure of a swell)
They will soon proceed to teach him that he doesn't
own the earth

(With a quit-claim on the sun and moon as well).
They will show him that the country isn't altogether
slow,

And that they can travel any pace that he's a mind to
go,

He will be a right good fellow till they run him out of
dough—

Oh, it is a tale of merriment they tell!

So to keep his bones together he goes working on a
farm,

(Where they get up at a little after two)

Where they think to take him down a peg will not do
any harm,

(And they sleep when there is nothing else to do).

Where they work him like a nigger nearly twenty
hours a day,

And they don't disguise the fact that they consider him
a jay,

And he eats so much and sleeps so much he isn't worth
his pay—

Oh, it doesn't matter that his blood is blue.

He decides to do a season as a cowboy in the West,

(Where they call a man a boy until he's dead)

And he tries to walk a-swagger with a military chest,

(And he isn't overslept or overfed).

They will set him breaking bronchos, though it's little
to his mind;

With many new-learned epithets he'll perforate the
wind—

How can he know the boys have stuck a thistle on be-
hind?

He will end the exhibition on his head.

They will fill him full of liquor that'll frizzle his inside,
(In the cooler he can square it with his God)
He will spend his nights in places where the *demi-*
monde reside,
(In the morning he'll be minus watch and wad).
They'll abuse him as a youngster, they will mock him
as a man,
They'll make his life a thorny path in every way they
can,
Till he curses his existence and the day that it began,
And he wishes he was rotting in the sod.

He will write long tales to England, tales of bitterness
and woe,
(They will print 'em in the papers over there)
He will tell them pretty nearly everything he doesn't
know,
(And they'll take it all for gospel over there).
He will tell them that the country isn't fit for gentle-
men,
That any who escape from it do not come back again,
He is handy with his language and he wields a bitter
pen—
To the truth of each assertion he would swear.

He's a growler, he's a growser, he's a nuisance, he's
a bum,

(And the country hasn't any room for such)

And they class him in the papers as "European scum,"

(They would rather have the Irish or the Dutch).

He's the butt of every jester, he's the mark of every
joke,

He is wearing borrowed trousers—he has put his own
in soak—

He's a useless good-for-nothing, beaten, buffeted, and
broke,

And of sympathy he won't get overmuch.

.

In a dozen years you'll find him with a section of his
own,

(He had to learn his lesson at the start)

With a happy wife and children he is trying to atone—

(For he loves the country now with all his heart).

He's a son of dear old England, he's a hero, he's a
brick;

He's the kind you may annihilate but you can never
lick,

For he played and lost, and played and lost, and stayed
and took the trick;

In a world of men he'll play a manly part.

A PRAIRIE HEROINE

THEY were running out the try-lines, they were staking out the grade;
Through the hills they had to measure, through the sloughs they had to wade;
They were piercing unknown regions, they were crossing nameless streams,
With the prairie for a pillow and the sky above their dreams,
They were mapping unborn cities in the age-long pregnant clay,
When they came upon a little mound across the right-of-way.

There were violets growing on it, and a buttercup or two,
That whispered of affection ever old and ever new,
And a little ring of whitewashed stones, bright in the summer sun,
But of marble slab or granite pile or pillar there was none;
And across the sleeping prairie lay a little, low-built shack,
With a garden patch before it and a wheat-field at its back.

“Well, boys, we’d better see him, and he hadn’t ought
to kick,
For we’ll give him time to move it if he does it pretty
quick.”
But scarcely had the foreman spoke when straight
across the farm
They saw the settler coming with a rifle on his arm;
Some would ha’ hiked for cover but they had no place
to run,
But most of them decided they would stay and see the
fun.

The farmer was the first to speak: “I hate to interfere,
And mighty glad I am to see the railway comin’ near,
But before you drive your pickets across this piece of
land
You ought to hear the story, or you will not under-
stand:
It’s the story of a girl who was as true as she was
brave,
And all that now remains of her is in that little grave.

“I didn’t want to bring her when I hit the trail out
West,
I knew I shouldn’t do it, and I did my level best
To coax her not to come out for a year or two, at
least,

But to stay and take it easy with her friends down
in the East;
But while I coaxed and argued I was feelin' mighty
glum,
And right down in my heart I kep' a-hopin' she would
come.

"Well, by rail and boat and saddle we got out here at
last,
A-livin' in the future, and forgettin' of the past;
We built ourselves a little home, and in our work and
care
It seemed to me she always took what was the lion's
share;
God knows just what she suffered, but she hid it with
a smile,
And made out that she thought I was the only thing
worth while.

"She stood it through the summer and the warm,
brown days of fall,
And of all the voices calling her she would not hear
the call;
But when the winter settled with its cold, white pall
of snow
She seemed to whiten with it, but she thought I didn't
know;

She tried to keep her spirits up and laugh my fears
away,
But I saw her growing thin and ever weaker day by
day.

“At last I couldn’t stand it any longer, so I said,
‘I think you’d better try and spend a day or two in bed
While I go for a doctor. It’s only sixty miles.’
She gave a little wistful look, half hidden in her smiles,
And said, ‘Perhaps you’d better, though I think I’ll
be all right
When the spring comes.’ . . . Well, I started out
that night.

“I made the trip on horseback, and we floundered on all
night,
And reached our destination in the early morning light.
But the doctor had gone out of town,—just where, no
one could say,
And a lump rose in my chest that fairly took my breath
away.
But I daren’t stay there thinking, and my search for
him was vain,
So I bought some wine and brandy and I started home
again.

“Forgetful of my horse, I spent the whole night on the
road,
Till early in the morning he collapsed beneath his load ;
I saw the brute was done for, and although it made me
cry,
I hacked into his jug’lar vein and left him there to die ;
And then I shouldered the supplies and staggered on
alone,
And thinking of my wife’s distress, I quite forgot my
own.

“She must ha’ watched all night for me, for in the
morning grey
She saw me stagger in the snow and fall beside the
way,
And God knows how she did it—she was only skin and
bone—
But she came out here and found me and dragged me
home alone,
And she took the precious liquor that had cost us all
so dear,
And poured it down this worthless hulk that’s standin’
blattin’ here. . . .

“I guess you know what happened : I lived, she passed
away ;
I robed her in her wedding-dress and laid her in the
clay ;

And every spring I plant the flowers that grow upon
her grave,
For I hold the spot as sacred as the Arimathæan's cave;
And when the winter snows have come, and all is
white and still,
I spread a blanket on the mound to keep out frost and
chill.

"Folks say I've got a screw loose, that I've gone to
acting queer,
But I sometimes hear her speaking, and I know she's
always near;
And sometimes in the night I feel the pressure of her
hand
And for a blessed hour I share with her the Promised
Land:—
Let man or devil undertake to desecrate my dead
And as sure as God's in heaven I will pump him full
of lead."

They were rough-and-ready railway men who stood
about the spot,
They were men that lied and gambled, they were men
that drank and fought,
But some of them were sneezing, and some were
coughing bad,

And some were blowing noses on anything they had;
And some of them were swallowing at lumps that
 shouldn't come,
And some were swearing softly, and some were simply
 dumb.

At last the foreman found his voice: "I guess your
 claim is sound;
I wouldn't care to run a track across that piece of
 ground. . . .
We'll have to change our lay-out . . . but I hope
 . . . we have the grace
To build a fitting monument to mark that holy place;
Put me down for a hundred; now, boys, how much
 for you?"
And they answered in a chorus, "We'll see the business
 through."

The passengers upon a certain railway o'er the plain
See a shining shaft of marble from the windows of
 the train,
But they do not know the story of the girl-wife in the
 snow
And the broken-hearted farmer with his lonely load of
 woe,
And none of them have guessed that the deflection in
 the line
Is the railway-builders' tribute to a prairie heroine.

GOING HOME

THE village lights grew dim behind, the snow lay vast
and white,
And silent as an icy shroud spread out upon the night;
A wan moon struggled with the clouds, and through
the misty haze
The trails that branched to left and right were tangled
as a maze;
The settler's horses plodded in the soft, uncertain
snow;
And, stealing cautiously behind, a Thing moved to and
fro.

The trail was little travelled, and the pale, sad, sickly
light
Was hindrance, rather than a help, to read the road
aright;
A dozen miles lay stretched between the settler and his
shack:
He thought of many things that night—not once of
turning back.
Above the crunching of the snow he heard the rising
wind,
But never looked—and never saw—the Thing that stole
behind.

The trail was lost; the horses took their way across
the plain;
The settler strove to hold the course, but strove, alas,
in vain;
The fickle wind seemed scarce to stay a moment at a
place—
Now howling in a rear attack, now snapping at his
face;
And nearing, leering, peering, in the ghastly, ghostly
light,
The Thing came softly after as it followed in the night.

A light! a light! a welcome light gleamed friendly
from afar:
Oh, can it be—it cannot be—'tis surely not a star?
Nay, nay, it is more warm and near, a happy farmer's
home
That beckons to the wanderer, "You need no longer
roam."
With eager hope they hastened on, and plied across the
plain;
As often as the horses fell they rose to plunge again.

The hours moved on, the miles moved on, they fol-
lowed as a dream
The waning light, the dying light, of that deceitful
gleam,

And when at last it seemed the place must almost be
in sight,
The light went out! Oh, perfidy! Oh, murderous,
mocking light!
'Twas well the ears grew deaf before the howling of
the wind,
Nor heard the ghoulish chuckle of the gloating Thing
behind.

The snow lay deep; the horses floundered with the
heavy sleigh,
Till, plunging in a sudden drift, they tore the tongue
away;
The sleepy driver knew it not, as through his nerveless
hands
His hold on life was slipping with the frozen leather
bands. . . .
The night was calm and beautiful, the frost had ceased
to smart. . . .
*The Thing had leapt upon him and was tearing at his
heart!*

.

The room was warm and cosy, and the light was soft
and low,
Her presence seemed to radiate a tender, girlish glow,
And when she placed her hand in his, the soft, caress-
ing palm

Was cure for every trouble, and for every pain a balm :
And she whispered, "Sweet, my sweetheart, I'll be
faithful, I'll be true;
In the springtime, in the springtime, I will cross the
sea to you." . . .

A little bed was fashioned in the fitful firelight flare,
A little boy was kneeling as he said his evening prayer ;
And mother-hands upon his head, that fondled in his
hair,
And sense of quiet comfort and respite from every
care ;
And a pillow white and downy, and a bed so soft and
deep,
And tired lips were lisping, "Now I lay me down to
sleep." . . .

Again the scene was changed : A flood of mellow, am-
ber light,
That filled the soul with ecstasy of infinite delight ;
While crystal-cadenced music tinkled through the yel-
low glow,
The lullabyes of childhood, the love-songs of long ago :
The sea of God on every hand is silent silver lay :
An atom fell : its circles spread through all eternity.

.

The Thing was gone; its work was done; a lump of
lifeless clay

Sat crouching, crouching, crouching in the dawning of
the day;

The frozen eyeballs stared upon a wilderness of snow,
And peered into the future, to the Place no man may
know.

A coyote prowled about the place, and sniffed below
the sleigh,

And howled a melancholy howl, and slunk in fear
away.

GOD'S SIGNALMAN

WELL, no, I'm not superstitious,—at least, I don't call
it that,—

But when someone spins a creepy yarn I don't deny it
flat,—

For a man who spends a lifetime with the throttle in
his hand

Is bound to have adventures that he cannot understand;
I sometimes think our knowledge here is but a sorry
show,—

We're only on the borderland of what there is to know.

I used to think a man could know all things that could
be known;

That he should not acknowledge any power above his
own;

That, however strange the circumstance, there always
is a cause

That is in complete obedience to some of Nature's laws;
But I couldn't shake conviction off, no matter how I
tried,

And I've changed my way of thinking since the night
that Willie died.

Yes, Willie was my little son—my greatest earthly
joy—

And wife and I just kind o' seemed to dote upon the
boy;

When I was out on duty she would hover round the
 lad,
And treasure up his sayings to repeat them to his dad;
And every night, at lighting time, I knew that, without
 fail,
His baby lips were praying for the man out on the
 rail. . . .

Ah, well, for three short years we knew what such a
 treasure is,
And we grew ever more attached to those sweet ways
 of his;
When one day, swinging through the gate, I saw, with
 blanching face,
My wife as pale as ashes, and a doctor in the place. .

. .
I tried to go in steady, but my knees were knocking
 hard,
And the light went out of heaven as I staggered up
 the yard.

The doctor was a friend of mine, with children of his
 own,
But he didn't need to tell me, for a blind man would
 have known
By the labored, quick-caught breathing, and the little
 burning brow,

That the Visitor was ready and was waiting for him
now.

We sat about his bedside in silent, deep despair,
And the years rolled down upon us as we faced each
other there.

'Twas a little before midnight when a ring came at
the bell,

And the call-boy said, "Excuse me, sir, but I was sent
to tell

You that the Limited is waiting, and there's no one
else about;

They're expecting you to take her. If you don't, she
can't go out."

I left the answer to my wife. With lips as white as
snow,

She whispered, "Do your duty," and I said, "All right,
I'll go."

My fireman knew my trouble, and in rough-and-ready
way

He let me know his heart was feeling things he couldn't
say;

The night was dark and moonless, but the bright stars
overhead

Seemed to whisper to each other, "His little boy is
dead."

The very locomotive seemed to read my thoughts
aright,
And the monster sobbed in sympathy as we bulleted
the night.

We'd been running fast and steady till a little after
two;
All the passengers were sleeping, except, perhaps, a few
Who sat a-swapping stories in the smoker, when a
sight
Met my eyes that fairly froze my blood in terror and
affright—
For there, before me, standing, in the halo of the light
Was a little child outlined against the blackness of the
night!

Oh, I could not be mistaken, I would know him any-
where,
With his father's mouth and forehead, and his mother's
eyes and hair,
And little arms outstretched to me that seemed to coax
and say,
"Come, Daddy, come and kiss me, for I'm going far
away."
I flung the brake and throttle, and amid the hissing
steam
The vision grew, and waned away, and vanished as a
dream!

My fireman was beside me: "Your nerve is going,
Jack;

Let's leave the engine here and take a walk along the
track.

The exercise will do you good." I followed as he led,
Until we reached the gorge about a hundred yards
ahead:

The night wind cooled my temples as we walked the
bridge upon,

Till we sudden stopped with a sudden gasp—

—THE CENTRE SPAN WAS GONE!

.

You may call it hallucination, as some of the others do,
But I know that the Master took my boy that night at
half-past two;

And the prayers of a hundred passengers had been
offered up in vain

Had his spirit, clad in his baby dress, not stood before
my train. . . .

I know I cried in my window-seat, and was otherwise
ill-behaved,

But the life that I lost was more to me than all the lives
he saved.

JUST BE GLAD

FEELIN' kind o' all run down?

Mighty bad:

Sick and tired o' life in town?

Don't be sad:

What you're needing isn't rest:

Square your shoulders, raise your chest;

Pack your turkey; go out West—

Just be glad!

Gone astray in No-Man's-Land?

Silly lad!

Ought to have your carcass tanned

With a gad:

Should ha' kept the narrow track:

Never mind, you can't go back;

Things may not be quite so black—

Just be glad!

Gone and blown in all your cash

On a fad?

Livin' now on soup and hash?

Writin' Dad?

Don't you do it. Here's a tip:

Keep a good stiff upper lip;

Needn't fall because you slip—

Just be glad!

Friends refuse to help you out?
Don't get mad!
You would be a lazy lout
If they had.
Do not envy place or pelf;
Praise the Lord, you've got your health;
Dig in! Be a man yourself—
Just be glad!

All the world may say or do,
Good or bad,
Isn't anything to you—
Just be glad!
Though you work at book or trade,
Though you work with pen or spade,
Hump yourself—you'll make the grade—
Just be glad!

RETROSPECT

I WONDERED why the fields were not
 Enchanting as in days gone by,
I viewed each memory-treasured spot,
Each path and nook still unforgot—
 Beheld them with unmoistened eye—
 And saw in old familiar scenes
 The graves of many might-have-beens,
Yet wondered why my spirit sought
Its old delight—and found it not.

I wondered why the breezes blew,
 But thrilled me not as in the past,
Nor re-inspired the thoughts I knew
And strange delights that warmed and grew
 When here their fancies held me fast,
 And felt the night wind on my face—
 The same old wind—the same old place—
And mustered memories in review
I knew of old when breezes blew.

I wondered why the summer skies
 Were not so fair as once they were,
I gazed on them with older eyes
And spirit sane and worldly-wise,
 But in the heaven's silver blurr

No fancy linked beyond the dome
Nor spread for me a broader home
In starry-studded Paradise,
That once I saw in summer skies.

I wondered why the summer wind
And fields and skies of yesterday
And boyhood paths that still I find
Are impotent to fire the mind
Now sorely schooled in manhood's way;
And realized my tale of years
Had stolen that which most endears—
The truths by little boys divined
Elude us like the summer wind.

THE PRAIRIE

THE City? Oh, yes, the City
Is a good enough place for a while,
It fawns on the clever and witty,
And welcomes the rich with a smile;
It lavishes money as water,
It boasts of its palace and hall,
But the City is only the daughter—
The Prairie is mother of all!

The City is all artificial,
Its life is a fashion-made fraud,
Its wisdom, though learned and judicial,
Is far from the wisdom of God;
Its hope is the hope of ambition,
Its lust is the lust to acquire,
And the larger it grows, its condition
Sinks lower in pestilent mire.

The City is cramped and congested,
The haunt and the covert of crime;
The Prairie is broad, unmolested,
It points to the high and sublime;
Where only the sky is above you,
And only the distance in view,
With no one to jostle or shove you—
It's there a man learns to be true!

Where the breeze whispers over the willows,
Or sighs in the dew-laden grass,
And the rain-clouds, like big, stormy billows,
Besprinkle the land as they pass;
With the smudge-fire alight in the distance,
The wild-duck alert on the stream,
Where life is a psalm of existence,
And opulence only a dream.

Where wide as the plan of creation
The Prairies stretch ever away,
And beckon a broad invitation
To fly to their bosom, and stay;
The prairie-fire smell in the gloaming—
The water-wet wind in the spring—
An empire untrod for the roaming—
Ah, this is a life for a king!

When peaceful and pure as a river
They lie in the light of the moon,
You know that the Infinite Giver
Is stringing your spirit a-tune;
That life is not told in the telling,
That death does not whisper adieu,
And deep in your bosom up-welling,
You know that the Promise is true!

To those who have seen it and smelt it,
To those who have loved it alone,
To those who have known it and felt it—
The Prairie is ever their own;
And far though they wander, unwary,
Far, far from the breath of the plain,
A thought of the wind on the Prairie
Will set their blood rushing again.

THE SUFFERERS

THERE'S a breed that is born to suffer,
To carry the sin of the age,
And it matters not the condition,
And it matters not the wage,
Nor where in the wide creation
The lure of the light they see—
There's a breed that is born to suffer,
As ever the breed must be.

Not for them is the peace of pleasure,
Or the comfort of content;
Ever they bear the burden,
Though weary they be, and bent;
Their days are spent in labor,
Their nights are spent in pain:
There's a breed that is born to suffer,
That others may reap the gain.

They are not of one flag or nation;
They are not of one color or race;
They are not of one school of thinking;
They are not of one class or place;
But the blood of the breed is in them
And will not let them lie:
There's a breed that is born to suffer,
And suffer they must, or die.

When the world is laxed and lazy,
Or sleeping in sweet content,
The breed is hard at the business
For which the breed was sent;
And straining with brain and muscle,
In saintliness or sin,
They pry at the gates of knowledge
That all may enter in.

For the Thought that demands expression;
For the Purpose that will attain;
For the Thing that must be discovered,
They carry the weight of pain;
For the Truth that needs revealing,
For the Law that is still unknown—
These are the calls they answer,
And make the call their own.

The world knows not that they labor,
The world knows not of the need,
The world knows not of the doing
Until it beholds the Deed;
And some it accepts with gladness,
And some it rejects with scorn,
But the sufferer had to do it,
For to that end was he born.

And so in the hours of darkness
They try the untrodden ways,
There's never a path leads onward
But the path their efforts blaze;
And little they care for labor,
Though weary and dark the night;
There's a breed that is born to suffer—
To suffer is their delight!

*The world may read the verses,
But it will not understand,
For it does not know the workers,
Nor the way the work is planned;
But the Men of the Midnight Effort—
To them will the truth be known,
For the breed that was born to suffer
Have a language of their own.*

THE HOMESTEADER

FAR away from the din of the city,
I dwell on the prairie alone,
With no one to praise or to pity,
And all the broad earth for my own;
The fields to allure me to labor,
The shanty to shelter my sleep,
A league and a half to a neighbor—
And Collie to watch if I weep.

Yes, this is my place of probation,
Though woefully windy and bare,
I am lord of my own habitation,
I mock at the meaning of care;
For here, on the edge of creation,
Lies, far as the vision can fling,
A kingdom that's fit for a nation—
A kingdom—and I am the king!

The grasses aglare in the morning
With crystalline radiance shine;
The dew-drops are jewels adorning,
Are jewels—and the jewels are mine;
The heat of the sun when it shineth,
The wet of the wind when it rains,
Are balm to the heart that repineth—
The Medicine-Men of the plains!

I follow the plough in the breaking,
I tap the rich treasures of Time—
The treasure is here for the taking,
And taking it isn't a crime;
I ride on the rack or the reaper
To harvest the fruit of my hand,
And daily I know that the deeper
I'm rooting my soul in the land.

They say there is wealth in the doing,
That royal and rich are the gains,
But 'tisn't the wealth I am wooing
So much as the life of the plains;
For here in the latter-day morning,
Where Time to Eternity clings,
Midwife to a breed in the borning,
I behold the Beginning of Things!

When, reckless of time and of trouble
I watch till the water-fowl comes,
Or, picking my steps in the stubble,
I steal where the prairie-hen drums;
When shooting the wolf in the brushes,
Or spearing the pike in the stream,
Or potting the crane in the rushes—
Ambition seems only a dream.

When darkness envelops creation,
And shadows lie deep on the plain,
I sit in my rude habitation
And ponder my childhood again;
Then voices come out of the distance,
Far voices from over the sea,
They call from the depths of existence—
I know they are calling to me!

The voices of song and of motion,
The voices of laughter and light,
They're calling from over the ocean—
Oh God! could I answer to-night!
The voices of friend and of lover,
The voices I knew in the past—
I turn to my pallet to smother
The thoughts that have found me at last!

.

*Greater than the measure of the heroes of the past,
He is building for the future, and his edifice will last;
Though they count him but a common man, he holds
the Outer Gate,
And posterity will own him as the father of the State.*

THE GRAMOPHONE

WHERE the lonely settler's shanty dots the plain,
And he sighs for friends and comradeship in vain,
Through the silences intense
Comes a sound of eloquence
Shrilling forth in steely, brazen, waxen strain—
The deep, resonant voice of Gladstone calling from
the tomb,
Or Ingersoll's deliverance before his brother's
bier;
Then a saucy someone singing, "When the daisies
are in bloom,"
And the fife and drummers rendering "The Bri-
tish Grenadier."

Back as far into the hills as they could get,
They've a roof that turns the winter and the wet,
They are grizzled but they're gay,
They've a daily matinee,
They are happy though they're head and ears in debt—
"I wish I had my old girl back again,"
"If the wind had only blown the other way,"
And broken voices join in the refrain
Of ev'ry tune the instrument will play.

There's a Scotchman holding down a mining claim
All unknown to Fortune, Influence, or Fame,
But a few of Harry's songs
And a solace for his wrongs
And he sings them ev'ry evening in his "hame"—
"I'm courtin' Bonnie Leezy Lindsay noo,"
"When I get back again"—you know the lilt—
"We parted on the shore," "I'm fou', I'm fou',"
"And that's the reason noo I wear the kilt."

There's a son of Erin in Saskatchewan,
He's at work a half an hour before the dawn,
But before he goes to bunk
He makes a table of his trunk
And he sets his clock-work concert thereupon—
"The harp that once through Tara's halls,"
"St. Patrick's day in the mornin',"
"The last rose of summer," and Fancy recalls
A glimpse of his "Kathleen Mavourneen."

There's an Englishman who's living in a shack,
He's a victim of the gramophone attack,
With a half-a-dozen kids
(He has half that many "quids")
And he dances with the youngest on his back—
Though he's living in the country of the Cree
The horn that hangs a fathom from his head
Stretches out a thousand leagues across the sea
And sings in dear old London town instead.

They are far from auditorium or hall,
But their minds are still atune to Music's call,
They can hear Caruso sing,
Or the bells of Shandon ring,
As they smoke and count the cracks along the wall.

.

*I'm a miracle of eloquence imprisoned in the wax,
I'm a mental inspiration operated by a spring,
I'm a nightly consolation from Yukon to Halifax,
And the ends of all creation sit and listen while I
sing;
I'm the Voice of all that man has sought and
gained;
I'm the throb of ev'ry heart that ever pained;
I'm the Genesis of Fate,
I'm the Soul of Love and Hate,
I'm the humanly impossible attained!*

THE PLOUGH

WHAT power is this that stands behind the steel?—
A homely implement of blade and wheel—
Neglected by the margin of the way,
And flashing back the blaze of dying day;
Or dragging slow across the yellow field
In silent prophecy of lavish yield,
It marks the pace of innocence and toil,
And taps the boundless treasure of the soil.

Before you came the red-man rode the plain,
Untitled lord of Nature's great domain;
The shaggy herds, knee-deep in mellow grass,
The lazy summer hours were wont to pass;
The wild-goose nested by the water side;
The coyote roamed upon the prairie wide;
The black bear trod the woods in solemn might;
The lynx stole through the bushes in the night.

No sound of toil was heard in all the land;
No joyous laugh or voice of sharp command;
No cloud of smoke from iron funnels thrown
Was through the autumn hazes gently blown;
No edge of steel tore up the virgin sod;
No church its shining finger turned to God;
No tradesman labored over bench and tool;
No children chattered on their way to school.

But all the land lay desolate and bare,
Its wealth of plain, its forest riches rare
Ungessed by those who saw it through their tears,
And Nature—miser of a thousand years—
Was adding still to her immense reserve
That shall supply the world with brawn and nerve :
But all lay silent, useless, and unused,
And useless 'twas because it was unused.

You came. Straightway the silent plain
Grew mellow with the glow of golden grain ;
The axes in the solitary wood
Rang out where stately oak and maple stood ;
The land became alive with busy din,
And as the many settled, more came in ;
The world looked on in wonder and dismay—
The building of a nation in a day !

By lake and river, rock and barren waste,
A peaceful army toiled in eager haste ;
Ten thousand workers sweating in the sun
Pressed on the task so recently begun ;
Their outworks every day were forced ahead—
And every day they gave their toll of dead—
Until at length the double lines of steel
Received the steaming steed and whirling wheel !

Where yesterday the lazy bison lay
A city glitters in the sun to-day;
His paths are turned to streets of wood and stone,
And thousands tread the way he trod alone;
The mighty hum of industry and trade
Fills all the place where once he held parade,
And far away the unheard river's play
Makes joyous night still brighter than the day!

Upon the plains a thousand towns arise,
And quickly each to be a city tries;
The sound of trade is heard on every hand,
And sturdy men rise to possess the land;
Awhile they lingered, thinking it a dream,
But now they flow in a resistless stream
That seems to fill the prairie far and near,
Yet in its vastness soon they disappear.

Where once the silent red-man spurned the ground
A land of peace and plenty now is found,
A land by Nature destined to be great,
Where every man is lord of his estate;
Where men may dwell together in accord,
And honest toil receive its due reward;
Where loyal friends and happy homes are made,
And culture follows hard the feet of trade.

This you have made it : Is it vain to hope
The sons of such a land will climb and grope
Along the undiscovered ways of life,
And neither seek nor be found shunning strife,
But ever, beckoned by a high ideal,
Press onward, upward, till they make it real ;
With feet sure planted on their native sod,
And will and aspirations linked with God ?

THE TERROR

THE night is dark; the night wind moans; the clouded
stars hide in the sky;
A rasping insect somewhere drones his mate a mirth-
less lullabye;
The hinges creak without a cause; the frost-sweat
gathers on the door;
A mouse in the partition gnaws, and shadows sneak
along the floor.

The night is dark; a she-wolf howls; strange noises
mingle in the air;
Who knows what form of demon prowls to drag
despondents to his lair?
It is no night for man to sleep; the rafters rattle over-
head,
And formless spirits gawk and creep from out the
prehistoric dead!

I hear them ride the chimney-tin—they sit astride the
collar-beams—
Through wooden walls they flutter in and light the
place with baneful gleams;
Their forces muster thick and fast, they sweep along in
fiendish glee—
The spirit-army of the past, of Blackfoot, Stoney,
Swampy, Cree.

The plowed-up bones of ages gone—they call across
the haunted plain,

The essence of a spirit drawn from Savagery's speech-
less pain—

Of flint, and dirk, and scalping-knife and white men
dying in despair—

The settler slain beside his wife—and little tufts of
baby hair!

The walls are feeble—hark!—and thin; they barricade
the soul in vain

Where ghostly faces leer and grin and flit athwart the
window-pane;

The Night is crouched against the door—the swelling
Terror rushes in—

The echo of my forty-four is idle answer to the din.

“Aha, Aha! You hear that sound?” You fool! 'twas
but your crazy shriek;

When dead men populate the ground what boots a
living man to speak?

Aha! 'tis good when men are dead; 'tis very good when
red blood flows;

So place the muzzle to your head and touch the trigger
with your toes—

.

*Handcuff and shackle him and throw him in a cell;
Grab a leg along with me—never mind the yell—
He has plumb forgotten all the sense he had;
Simply prairie-crazy—raving, prairie-mad!*

"THOU SHALT NOT STEAL"

TORONTO.—A post-office employee was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for stealing two money orders. He leaves a wife and five small children in destitute circumstances.—*News Despatch*.

"THOU shalt not steal," the Angel said, as he chiselled
a slab of stone,

"I give you the everlasting law that a man's own is
his own,"

And then from out of the Master's mind, without a
thought of shame,

He took a scroll of burnished gold and he fashioned
the block—the same.

"Thou shalt not steal," the Church declared; "now
praise we all our God,

He hath led us up from the miry clay to the paths His
feet have trod."

So they gave their love to the things on high, and thus,
with sweet accord,

They robbed the starving souls of men to waste it on
the Lord.

"Thou shalt not steal," the Nation said, and then it
turned its eyes

To a struggling state that was sapped and weak, and it
seemed an easy prize;

So the arm of the mighty nation took, with fingers drip-
ping red,
As it stole the life of a sister state from the hands of
the noble dead.

“Thou shalt not steal,” the Magnate said, “I do not like
the word,
In a business sense misunderstood by the simple, com-
mon herd;
I had rather pay for the things I need,” and so, with-
out delay,
He bought a legislature that had wisdom to obey.

“Thou shalt not steal,” the Law declares, and the sin-
ner must pay the price,
And the world abhors the petty thief who falls to the
common vice,
But the rich and the good and the powerful may steal
—if they do it well—
And the world sends them to heaven, but it sends the
poor—to hell!

THE EARLY DAYS

YES, times have changed since the early days and
things are different now ;
We used to tramp from dawn to dusk in the trail of
a walking-plough,
And sow our grain from a canvas sack with a barrel-
hoop for a mouth,
And we kind o' felt that Providence controlled the frost
and drouth ;
And in harvest work we always neighbor forth and
back,
And never thought of threshing till the grain was in
the stack ;
And hauled our wood in the winter-time, and smoked
beside the fire,
And felt our lot was everything that reason could
desire.

True, we had little money ; our homes were plain and
bare ;
Maybe a box for a table, maybe a block for a chair ;
Straw to repose our bodies at the end of the well-
worked day,
And the stars saw through the knot-holes in the
shingles where we lay ;

Food that was mostly our raising, coffee from toasted
wheat,
Cottonade for our Sunday suits, moccasins for our
feet.
Hard were our frames with labor, knotted our hands
with toil,
And we went to bed at twilight to save the price of oil.

Hardship? Perhaps, but old-timers look back at the
early days
Before we had come to realize that practical farming
pays,
Back at the times we were all so poor that none of
us thought of wealth,
Back at the times when we found content in industry
and health,
Back at the nights in the shanty, when the wolves
howled in the snow,
Back at the old sod stable and the cattle in a row,
Back at the distances still unmapped, at the trails that
were still untrod,
When round about were the wastes of earth and over-
head was God.

Yes, times have changed since the early days; farming
is now an art;
They're coming for land in motor cars—but we came
in a cart—
They're tearing the prairie with steam and gas, turn-
ing the rivers loose
To water the arid regions and bring them into use;
Binding the earth with railway lines, netting the world
with wires,
Leaving the mail at our corner-posts, pampering our
desires;
They show us that times are better, prove it a thou-
sand ways,
But we think of the old-time comradeship and sigh
for the early days.

THE HOMESTEADER TO HIS DOG

WELL, sir, sitting there and winking,
Same's you'd like to talk to me,
How'd you know that I was thinking
Of the folks beyond the sea?
How'd you guess that in the gloaming
Of the snow-enshrouded night
All my thoughts had gone a-homing
To the days of old delight?

Through the light that leaps and glistens
In your soft and sober eyes,
I can see a soul that listens
To the harps of Paradise;
Snatched from me when the devotion
Of my heart was at her feet:
In a land beyond the ocean
Life is hard and incomplete.

Towser, what you know of sorrow?
Nought disturbs your sleep and play;
No ambitions for to-morrow,
No regrets of yesterday;
Yet your sympathetic fawning
As you read your master's mind
Hints that you may have a dawning
Of the aches of humankind.

Here I sit and dream and ponder
As the wintry blizzards roar,
And my starving soul grows fonder
Thinking of the friends of yore;
You alone of all creation
Throb responsive to my heart;
In the building of a nation,
Doggie, you have done your part.

Though I pine thus unavailing
For the touch of human hand,
Profitless is my bewailing—
Strange that I should love the land!
Love its grand, grim desolation;
Storms that sift me like a sieve—
Here, alone, of all creation
Seems the proper place to live.

What although the crust is scanty,
And the loneliness intense,
You and I will share the shanty,
Unconcerned for why or whence;
Let the whining blizzard rattle
And the frost-imps snap and bite—
Come, it's time to feed the cattle
Ere we roll in for the night.

MY BELOVED

*I knew her in her infancy,
Before she laughed to other eyes;
I kissed her tresses all the day,
And sat with her in glad surprise;
And knew her heart entirely true,
And gazed into her azure blue,
And through her virgin laugh and play
Beheld the gates of Paradise!*

*I loved her in her infancy,
And held that she was wholly mine;
And worshipped her as one divine;
From Kicking Horse to Thunder Bay
I loved her in her infancy.*

*I saw her in her womanhood,
A thousand suitors at her door;
I hoped for her her greatest good,
Yet marvelled at the train she bore—
And hated prestige, if it brought
Her virgin purity to nought;
And held myself a jealous prude,
And for her faults I loved her more.*

*I loved her in her womanhood,
And wondered at her growing charm—
(God grant it bring her not to harm)
I trusted her as still I could
And loved her in her womanhood.*

*And still what time the night-wind blows
Across the primal-planted plain,
I see her rise through cloud and rain
To all the fulness beauty knows,
And feel my questionings are vain.*

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